

OUR EYES

By teens • For teens • About teens

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RICHARD GREEN/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

California State University, Monterey Bay outreach specialist Carolina Sordia, right, helps Greenfield High School students Maria Cristina Serrato, Christina Monroy, Katrina Ramirez and Daniel Malagon fill out paperwork.



Stress a way of life for some students

There are times when we wish we had a break from our lives — to be able to put everything on hold and just clear our minds from everything. Or to at least have five pleasant minutes of relaxation without a mind clouded up with worries over what needs to be done. These feelings can be caused by the mind and body's cruel enemy: stress.

Everyone experiences stress at one point or another. Stress is an emotional, physical or mental strain that is caused by anxiety or work overload. The positive effect is that it can excite and push you into action, possibly bringing out your best. On the other hand, it can tear you up and drag you into depression and a deeper anxiety.

It's difficult being a teenager under stress because no one seems to care about or understand what you're experiencing, especially parents. Teenagers can be lazy at times (or most of the time) but it doesn't necessarily mean teenage life is happy and free of worries or responsibilities. Sometimes there's not enough time in a day to balance friendship, family, work, relationships, responsibilities or yourself. Stress may leak into those areas and cause more problems.

For the past couple of weeks, my life has felt like it was on a deadline. I have been incredibly busy and terribly tired. I had to finish pages for the yearbook deadline, write something for the school newspaper, study for tests, trying to pay attention and stay to stay awake in my classes, write this column and a million other things.

I haven't had the time to be a friend or be there for my family. If I do one thing, I'm sacrificing another. It disappoints me to the greatest extent, and I feel like I'm disappointing others as well.

What's comforting, yet unfortunate, is I'm not alone. There are other students at my school, the majority being seniors, who are stressed out. After bringing up the subject during economics class, students started sharing how busy they are and how they have been affected with their overload. There was a

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A brighter future

First generation students aim high

By RIA MEGNIN
The Salinas Californian

For teens whose parents didn't reach college, higher education is uncharted territory: confusing, frightening and seemingly out of reach.

But the glittery promises of better jobs beckon, and some first-generation students find ways to make it happen.

Students like Daniel Malagoa. The 18-year-old Greenfield High School senior immigrated from Mexico with his family in 2000. The youngest of six children, he

said his parents have gone from working in the fields to working in a packing plant.

"I don't want to see my older brothers work in the fields or fast food restaurants the rest of their lives," Malagoa said. "I don't want to see my mother having backaches all the time. I want to show them I'm thankful for the opportunity they gave me to be here in America."

Malagoa found support through the Educational Talent Search program, which helps low-income, potential first-generation college-goers through outreach efforts starting in middle school.

From homework assistance to summer programs to reassuring worried parents, ETS strives to help students make the leap to

higher education.

"If you look historically at who's had the most difficult time going off to college, it's students who come from backgrounds where their parents haven't gone," said Luis Sandoval, an outreach counselor who grew up in migrant camps and is himself an ETS graduate.

The federally-funded program has a 90 percent success rate in the region, helping 1,200 low-income students a year from King City to Hollister. ETS's four local counselors and 12 peer advisors are based out of CSUMB, but encourage students to follow their dreams to any school, anywhere.

Although they're first-generation, many students say their families are the ones pushing them

TO ATTEND

It's not too late for first-generation and migrant students to apply for the fall semester at state schools. Call Educational Talent Search at 582-3960 for information.

toward school.

"My brothers tell me to go to school, so I can have a better future," said Karina Ramirez, 17, a Greenfield senior whose mother supports four children by working in fields and at a winery. "If I wasn't part of the program, I'd be stuck right now," Ramirez said. "I wouldn't know what to do. I'd be really scared."

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HERE'S THE STAFF

Shown from left are **Jessica Contreras**, Alisal High School senior, **Tirth Patel**, North Salinas High School junior, **Katie Cochran**, Greenfield High School senior, **Shaina Cook**, Notre Dame High School junior, **Kristina Serra**, Seaside High School freshman, **Veronica Diaz**, North Monterey County High School junior, **Jake Horn**, Hallmark Charter School senior and **Corinne Warnshuis**, Salinas High School senior. Not pictured is **Pablo Felix**, Everett Alvarez High School senior.



ABOUT THIS PAGE

"Our Eyes" is The Salinas Californian's twice-monthly page by, for and about Salinas-area teenagers. This page, which publishes every first and third Tuesday, is conceived and produced through the eyes of teen writers drawn from local high schools.

Though Our Eyes is aimed specifically at readers ages 13 to 18, we welcome your suggestions and ideas regardless of age. Send comments by e-mail to OurEyes@TheCalifornian.com.