

THE MONITOR



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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022

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Making spirits bright



Photos by Joel Martinez | jmartinez@themonitor.com

Rodrigo San Vicente, 10, stands next to his mother Rosa Vasquez at his home on Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2022, in Edinburg.

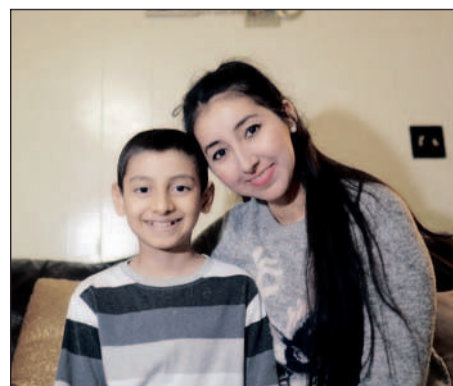
Family of Edinburg child with cancer short on money, not hope

BY ERIKA DE LOS REYES
STAFF WRITER

It's every parent's worst nightmare. Rosa Vasquez's 10-year-old son, Rodrigo, has been diagnosed with cancer. Such a diagnosis is difficult for anyone to endure, but for this Edinburg family, their only financial assistance is in the form of a program for kids with special needs. They haven't really received any other help.

Her husband is the sole breadwinner for the family due to her having to focus all her energy on her son, Rodrigo, who is often in and out of the hospital.

Due to many of the costs of the treatment and hospital visits, the father often works seven days a week in order to raise money for his son. He works in various trade jobs such as carpentry,



Rodrigo San Vicente, 10, poses next to his mother Rosa Vasquez at his home on Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2022, in Edinburg.

plumbing and electrician work.

Although most of her time is occupied by hospital visits, Rosa helps her

husband with money by selling food whenever she gets the chance.

Rodrigo was first diagnosed with cancer five years ago after his parents noticed his sudden weight loss and fatigue.

"We took him to the doctor and that is when they told us that he had cancer — Wilms tumor," Rosa explained, adding that the tumor was found on the left kidney.

In order to remove the tumor he had to go through chemotherapy and radiation before undergoing surgery in 2017.

Although the surgery allowed doctors to remove the tumor from his left kidney, this was not the last time he would be hospitalized.

In 2020, they found another tumor in his right lung in which he again went

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Holiday Parade set to roll

Houston radio personality named grand marshal

BY BERENICE GARCIA
STAFF WRITER

McALLEN — Radio personality Raul Brindis will serve as the grand marshal for the McAllen Holiday Parade on Saturday.

Brindis, a Houston-based radio host, will be at the forefront of the procession, the city announced Tuesday.

"Raul is an icon in the Latino media community and is beloved by his fans throughout the Univision Radio network," said McAllen Mayor Javier Villalobos. "He has a great affection for McAllen and our parade, having been a part of it every year since its inception. We're glad to be able to bring him back as our 2022 MHP grand marshal, thanks to our great radio partner Univision Radio and KGBT-La Jefa."

Having appeared in the McAllen parade a previous eight times, this will be Brindis' first as grand marshal.



Brindis

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Mission siblings implicated in public corruption case

BY DINA ARÉVALO
STAFF WRITER

Two siblings — who are related to the former Mission mayor — were implicated in a public corruption case involving the Mission school district and an energy savings company.

An updated federal indictment implicates Mission real estate agent Veronica O'Caña in a bribery scheme that has already ensnared her brother, Jorge O'Caña, with criminal charges. Federal prosecutors filed the super-

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through chemotherapy and radiotherapy before undergoing yet another surgery to remove the tumor.

However, in 2021, they once again found a tumor in the lower region of his right lung and repeated the chemotherapy and radiotherapy in hopes to reduce the size of the tumor in order for it to be surgically removed.

As of Wednesday, Rodrigo was still in the process of receiving chemotherapy.



In fact, he attends chemotherapy every three weeks. He spends a whole week in the hospital where he is monitored throughout the



process due to the severity of the chemo.

Ricardo and his mom then return home for two weeks to allow him to rest before

beginning the treatment all over again.

"The hospital is like our second home," Rosa said, explaining that over the course of five years they have been in and out of the hospital.

Rosa explained that due to the diagnoses the past five years have been a whirlwind of ups and downs that affected the family in more ways than just financially.

Her oldest son, 11-year-old Daniel, often spends his time with his aunt who takes care of him while his mother is at the hospital with Rodrigo.

Although he understands the situation, Rosa explained that "he doesn't stop being a kid" and will sometimes ask his mother why she doesn't spend as much time with him as his brother.

"One time he even told me that he also wanted to get sick so that maybe that way I would spend more time with him," Rosa said with sadness in her voice.

This holiday season, Rosa is asking the community for help to make her family's Christmas a little brighter. Rosa said whatever help the community provides her family will be used to buy them clothing and food as

well as paying off her rent.

"Rodrigo wants a bike or a new pair of Nike shoes and Daniel a new jacket and shoes as well," Rosa said with a laugh, adding that even after all they've been through her kids have kept their festive spirit.

To help, call the United Way of South Texas at (956) 686-6331 and inquire about this family and the Spirit of Christmas campaign. The Monitor has partnered with the United Way of South Texas to garner support for Rio Grande Valley families in need of monetary donations, or other items and gifts specified in this story.