



# Newsletter

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## Winter 2012

### Campus Highlights: Clovis Campus Holds Fundraiser to Help Combat Domestic Abuse



Milan Institute Clovis, California - Students, staff and guests participate in the Girls' Night Out Carnivale.

On July 21, 2012, Milan Institute in Clovis, California, hosted a fundraiser for the Marjaree Mason Center. For more than 30 years, the Marjaree Mason Center has offered shelter, crisis support, legal assistance and counseling, at no cost, to victims of domestic violence in Fresno County. The center operates the county's only domestic violence shelters.

The Clovis campus's Girls' Night Out Carnivale fundraiser was a resounding success and as a result, a check was presented for \$1,472 to the Marjaree Mason Center. The donation is 85% of the total revenue raised from ticket sales. It also includes a personal contribution from Milan Institute President Gary Yasuda. In addition, clothing, toys and household items were collected during the event and donated to the Marjaree Mason Center.

Milan Institute School Director Emily Samons explained, "We have done this event the last four years as a way to get students and staff involved in helping those in need in our community. To date, over \$7,500 has been raised." The Marjaree Mason Center is affiliated with the national organization "CUT IT OUT," which provides a way for salon professionals and students to raise money to help those affected by domestic violence. "Our students also receive

### What's New

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#### Graduate Profiles:

Mercedes Llamas followed her dream to become a graduate of the Milan Institute Medical Assisting training program. Read about her success and the obstacles she overcame to reach her goal.

Staying focused on one word is what kept Maria Gonzales going while a student at Milan Institute of Cosmetology in Reno, Nevada. Follow her journey from the beginning all the way to graduation.

#### Campus Profile:

This issue's featured campus is Milan Institute of Cosmetology in Visalia, California. Find out how quickly the school has grown and how it strives to meet the needs of Central Valley students.

#### Employer Profile:

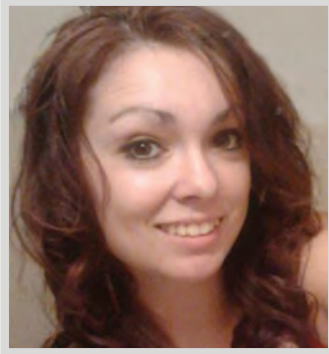
The clinic administrator of Massage Envy Spa in southwest Idaho shares what qualities he looks for in a good candidate when hiring for a massage therapist position.

a workshop on how to recognize signs of domestic abuse and what to do when their clients open up to them with troubling information," said Emily.

The Girls' Night Out Carnivale fundraiser was a success thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Milan Institute students, faculty and staff. Cosmetology students provided manicures and hair styles for guests, while esthetician students created carnivale-themed makeup designs. Massage therapy students were also on hand to provide relaxing chair massages. In all, over 250 services were performed that evening. Attendees enjoyed live music, food, refreshments, giveaways and shopping opportunities at booths hosted by local businesses. Milan students also hosted a fashion show featuring the latest summer trends. Guests were happy to know that the majority of the ticket sale revenue would help support a worthy cause. "This shelter has an excellent

## Graduate Profile: Mercedes Llamas, Class of 2012

Medical Assisting Program • Milan Institute - Visalia, CA



***"My experience at this school was wonderful. I am now a graduate from Milan Institute and very proud of it."***

Mercedes Llamas, a September 2012 graduate in medical assisting, can't help but praise her training at Milan Institute in Visalia, California. "My experience at this school was wonderful. I am now a graduate from Milan Institute and very proud of it. Thank you all so very much for making this possible," Mercedes commented.

As a recent high school graduate and stay-at-home mom, Mercedes had a desire to make a better life for herself and her young son. She had a dream of working in the medical field and enrolled in the Milan Institute Medical Assisting program. "I knew I wanted more than entry-level warehouse jobs. Obtaining a

job as a medical assistant will allow me to provide a stable and safe environment for my son," she said about her decision to continue her education.

Mercedes was quickly impressed by the supportive faculty and staff at the Visalia campus. "I've never learned so much in my schooling and had it actually stay with me until I came to Milan," said Mercedes. "The instructors push you to do your very best, and they want to see you succeed. They treated me like family and had faith in me."

Just prior to completing her program, Mercedes was faced with some particularly difficult personal issues. Her son was removed from her care, and full custody was temporarily awarded to his father. Despite this devastating setback, Mercedes continued to apply herself to her studies and externship. "I did not allow this personal hardship to interfere with my professional and educational life. Going through this difficult time made me even more determined to succeed to get my son back. I stayed focused with the goal I had set prior to enrolling at Milan. In November 2012, I was once again awarded custody of my son," Mercedes said.

"When times got really rough for me," she recalled, "the

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## Graduate Profile: Maria Gonzales, Class of 2012

Cosmetology Program • Milan Institute of Cosmetology - Reno, NV



***"My experience here at Milan was the greatest experience in my life. What kept me going was one simple word 'graduation.'"***

When Maria Gonzales received a phone call about "finding your career," she hadn't really given the idea of going to school for career training much thought. "I was already working on getting my GED, and cosmetology school at that moment was not on my mind," Maria recalled. Even so, Maria took the time to answer questions about what she would like to do for a future career. Soon, based on the information she provided, Maria was transferred to Milan Institute of Cosmetology, and she decided to enroll in the Cosmetology program at the Reno, Nevada, campus.

Starting out, Maria thought completing the program would

be easy. She had no children, no boyfriend and thought she would have no obstacles to keep her from graduating. Looking back, Maria admitted, "I was wrong. It wasn't as easy as I thought it would be!"

While enrolled in the Cosmetology program there were a number of challenges she had to overcome, including having to work two jobs to help pay her family's mortgage. "Suddenly, I had no time to rest. I would go to work at my first job, then go to school and then go to my second job to work the graveyard shift. It was a lot of hard work," she said. Due to her busy schedule, she lost touch with many friends and missed spending time with her family. According to Maria, she came to a point where she was nearly ready to give up and quit.

Although she faced many challenges, Maria continued to work toward her goal: "My experience here at Milan was the greatest experience of my life. What kept me going was one simple word 'graduation.' For me it has so much meaning and emotion. Since I hadn't graduated from high school, I was determined to graduate from Milan with the training I needed to begin a career." In recalling her drive and persistence to complete the program, Maria revealed, "I have no idea where all

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## Campus Profile: Milan Institute of Cosmetology • Visalia, CA



Milan Institute of Cosmetology in Visalia, CA

Milan Institute of Cosmetology began enrolling students in the Cosmetology program at the Visalia, California, location in January 2008. At the time, the student salon, classrooms and administrative offices were all located in one building. The program soon proved to be popular with local students, and in November 2009, the cosmetology classrooms and administrative offices were moved to a building across the parking lot. The school was then able to expand the student salon. In 2012, a Manicurist program was added to help better meet the needs of students within the community. Currently, over 220 students are enrolled between the two programs.

The school is located in Visalia, California, in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, halfway between San Francisco

and Los Angeles. Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National parks are all located nearby in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Visalia is a thriving community that takes pride in its small town feel and high quality of life. As the county seat of Tulare County, Visalia serves as the economic and governmental center to one of the most productive single agricultural counties in the country.

Leading the Milan Institute of Cosmetology Visalia campus team is School Director Michael Niksa. Prior to Milan, Michael spent six years working with educators throughout Southern California as a financial advisor for the Orange County Teachers Federal Credit Union. In September 2008, he made the move to the Central Valley and joined the Milan organization. Michael was dean of education for the allied health programs before transitioning to his current role as school director of Milan Institute of Cosmetology in the fall of 2010.

While the Visalia cosmetology campus is still fairly new, said Michael: "We are proud of the team we have assembled here. Our instructors have several years of experience, and every one of them continues to further their own education as well as follows the latest trends in cosmetology to ensure our students are getting the very best. Our administrative staff also takes great pride and ownership in our students'

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## Employer Profile: Massage Envy Spa • Nampa & Meridian, ID



A leader in the wellness and therapeutic massage industry, Massage Envy Spa is one of the valued employers of graduates from Milan Institute's Massage Therapy training program. The spa offers a variety of services including Cranial Sacral Therapy, Sports Massage, Hot Stone Therapy and Murad Healthy Skins Facials with a focus on customizing every session based on the individual's need.

In southwest Idaho, Massage Envy Spa has locations in Nampa and Meridian. Since opening the Nampa location in July 2007, it has hired 28 Milan Institute graduates. This accounts for over 50% of its entire massage staff. "Milan graduates come out of school with great technical training and the knowledge of how massage is a great benefit," said Randy Young, Massage Envy Spa Clinic Administrator. "The students we hire are professional and receptive to additional training specific to our clinics. We know that students from Milan are going to be a great addition to our team."

"We have a Milan Institute graduate therapist whose passion for massage just pours out of him," said

Randy about one example of outstanding service. "He treats every client as if they are the only client he will see that day. He goes out of his way to create a massage plan for every client and studies up on the needs of each one. He also volunteers his time at chair massage events and is willing to go above and beyond to make every client he sees feel important."

When looking to hire a new therapist, Randy noted that the qualities he looks for are not only massage skills but knowledge and communication as well. "Communication with clients is crucial. Knowing how the body works and responds to massage allows the therapist to create a specific massage plan for the client," stated Randy. "A good candidate should have knowledge of not just basic massage skills but detailed modalities too."

Randy's advice to new, and soon to be, massage therapy graduates is to remember that communication and practice are essential to success. "Do as many hours of hands-on practice as you can. Remember that graduation is just the beginning of your massage education, so keep up with continuing education units," recommends Randy.

Massage Envy Spa is a national franchise dedicated

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## It's a Boy!

Congratulations to Milan Institute President Gary Yasuda and his wife Ania on their new baby boy, Allen Jiro Yasuda. Baby "AJ" was born on July 10, 2012, weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz. Gary commented, "I have been looking forward to this moment for a long time. I am so proud to be a father. Ania and I thank you all for your well wishes."



Baby AJ and Batman

### Campus Highlights: Girls' Night Out Fundraiser (Continued)

reputation among our community for providing assistance to those in need. Some of our students have been touched by or know someone who has been involved in a negative relationship so it felt like a natural choice for us to raise awareness," Emily said.

For more information on how you can help, please visit the Marjaree Mason Center's website at [www.mmcenter.org](http://www.mmcenter.org).

### Graduate Profile: Mercedes Llamas (Continued)

campus dean was there to keep me motivated and help me stay strong. She would come in to class or stop me in the hall just to say hello and see how things were going. She was the person to talk to when you needed help with something or just needed someone to give you positive reinforcement before class."

With her recent graduation from Milan, Mercedes is currently interviewing for a position with a local healthcare provider and working closely with the Milan career services staff to obtain a job as a medical assistant. "The career services team has really been there for me. They've taught me how to look, act and be professional when being interviewed," she said.

"I know I picked the right school. Without everyone at Milan Institute who cared and wanted to see me succeed, I would have never made it this far in life," Mercedes stated. Her advice to other students as they work through their program: "Stay motivated, always be positive, and never give up!"

### Graduate Profile: Maria Gonzales (Continued)

that courage came from. I am very proud of myself!"

Maria graduated from the Cosmetology program in September 2012 and plans to work as a hairstylist for a year or two. Her future goal is to work as a stylist at runway fashion shows. She also hopes to donate her time and services to those in need.

As a graduate, Maria's advice to current and future students is: "Do not give up! There might be struggles and obstacles that try to hold you back from finishing what you started, but it is worth fighting for. Listen to your instructors, be physically and mentally involved, and observe as much as you can. And most of all, be positive, be creative and have fun!"

### Campus Profile: Milan Institute of Cosmetology Visalia, CA (Continued)

education, ensuring they have what they need to make the most of their time here with us."

Milan Institute of Cosmetology in Visalia is committed to community involvement. "We frequently host workshops and events that allow our students and guests to enjoy fun activities while giving back to the community," Michael shared. Recently the Visalia campus took part in Art Xposed, an event that helped to highlight the school and student salon while raising money to benefit TheBoys.org, an organization that helps spread awareness about male testicular cancer.

For more information about the Cosmetology and Manicurist career training programs or student salon services at Milan Institute of Cosmetology in Visalia, please call (559) 730-5350 or visit the website at [www.MilanInstitute.edu](http://www.MilanInstitute.edu).

For more information about our graduation rates, median loan debt of students who completed the program and other important information, please visit our website.

### Employer Profile: Massage Envy Spa (Continued)

to providing professional and affordable therapeutic massage and spa services. They have over 800 locations nationwide.

Massage Envy Spa in Nampa is located at 16404 North Marketplace Boulevard and can be reached at (208) 468-3689. The Meridian location is located at 1180 North Eagle Road and can be reached at (208) 343-3689. For additional information, visit [www.MassageEnvy.com](http://www.MassageEnvy.com).