

TAMU Student Research Week

March 19-23, 2001

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Student Research Week is a collaboration among the Office of the Vice President for Research, Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs, Office of Graduate Studies, Graduate Student Council, and the Department of Student Life.

El Salvador quake survivor fights kidney, heart failure

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — For two days and a night, the young musician lay beneath 15 feet of cinderblocks and mud while rescuers worked desperately to pull him to safety.

But the elation when Sergio Moreno was finally freed turned to agony on Monday when heart and kidney failure left him fighting for his life.

"After so much joy when we saw him pulled out, we are again living in anguish," said his mother, Leticia del Carmen de Moreno, weeping in the hospital.

Moreno, 22, is the keyboard player for the popular Salvadoran merengue band Grupo Algodon. But he recently decided to return to college to study computers, and had bought a humble, two-story house in the Las Colinas neighborhood of Santa Tecla, just outside the capital where he would study.

Saturday morning, Moreno was painting his new home when an earthquake sent the hillside above crashing down on top of him.

Moreno was trapped in darkness in the bathroom, with cinderblocks pinning his legs. The ironwork of a balcony shielded his upper body.

He had a cellular phone with him and dialed a friend. He got through, and within an hour, rescuers were cutting through concrete to open a pathway.

It was tough work, and with the earth still trembling, the rescuers knew they could be crushed at any moment. But Johnny "Cannibal" Ramos and Manuel Guzman were not going to abandon Moreno.

"We made a pact: no matter what the risks, we weren't going to leave until we got him out," Guzman said.

Digging mostly with their hands, the two rescue workers tunneled down 15 feet and opened a small hole

to where Moreno lay. They pushed in a garden hose, and told Moreno to put it in his mouth.

Then they attached the hose to an oxygen tank so the young man could breathe.

Ramos eventually made the hole bigger and told Moreno to stick his arm through it. Ramos inserted an IV tube to provide medicine and nourishment.

Slowly the work progressed. Aftershocks closed the hole even as the

son. They wept in the hospital waiting room.

"The rescue of Sergio was such a joy," said his father, Juan Moreno.

"But then the complications began."

When he arrived at the hospital, Moreno fell into a coma.

His mother talked to him, but his only response was to squeeze her hand, and then he could not even do that.

"Sergio my love, we're here with you. We won't leave you for a single moment," she told him, crying.

On Monday, Moreno lay in intensive care with a neck brace and a pirator and a web of tubes snaking into his arms and torso.

Doctors were preparing to amputate his left leg.

The attending nurse, who said hospital regulations prevented her from giving her name, said Moreno's heart was unstable but that his lungs might start functioning when the shock passed.

She said whether he could survive was "a question for God."

Guzman, the rescuer, returned home to find his wife had left him angry that he had abandoned his family during his 40 straight hours of work.

So he went to the hospital to see how Moreno was holding up.

His fatigues caked in mud and a surgical mask at his chin, he broke into tears when he saw Moreno's eyes in the waiting room.

"Just seeing you moves me," Guzman said, shaking hands with Moreno's father.

The father tearfully thanked her for his efforts, and Guzman responded: "Don't thank me. Thank God. Moreno's mother, motionless in the waiting room, said there was nothing they could do any more. "The only thing we can do is wait," she said, "and accept."

"The rescue of Sergio was such a joy. But then the complications began."

— Juan Moreno
Sergio Moreno's father

rescuers opened it, and Moreno became more and more frightened.

"You stayed here to watch me die," he told Ramos.

"No, I stayed to get you out of here," the rescuer assured him.

Finally, at 6:30 p.m. Saturday — 31 hours after the earthquake — the rescuers pulled Moreno from the rubble.

"It was an incredible joy," Ramos said. "We were all crying and hugging each other."

But out in the open, Moreno took a turn for the worse. The cinderblocks had cut off circulation to his legs, and when his blood began flowing again his body rejected it.

His heart stopped and paramedics got it started again.

His kidneys shut down, and they gave him dialysis.

Moreno's parents, an unemployed couple from the small port of Acajutla, 55 miles to the southwest, had rushed to the capital to be near their

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Campus With A Dream

The common thread that connects us all

Jazz Band: Karan Chavis
Tuesday, January 16, 2001
Rudder Fountain, Noon - 1 P.M.
MSC Town Hall

Unity March
Wednesday, January 17, 2001
Rudder Fountain, 11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.
Reception following in Wayne Stark Gallery

A Slice of Rice, Frijoles & Greens
A fun-filled mix of stories that give vivid insights into the multicultural experience!
Thursday, January 18, 2001
Rudder Theatre, 7:00 P.M.
MSC Asian Cultures Education Committee and the Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference

Speaker: Jane Elliott
Come hear the teacher who helped a group of elementary school students understand racism in her riveting assignment, *Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes*.
Wednesday, January 24, 2001
Bush Presidential Center, 6:00 P.M.
Beta Xi Chi Multicultural Fraternity

Film: Remember the Titans
Friday, January 26, 2001
Rudder Theater, 7:00 P.M.
MSC Film Society

Million Family March Discussion
Texas A&M and Prairie View A & M Students Review the October March
Monday, January 29, 2001
MSC 206, 7:30 P.M.
MSC Black Awareness Committee

A World of Faith
Discussion of World Religions
Tuesday, January 30, 2001
MSC Forsyth Center Gallery, 7:00 P.M.
MSC L.T. Jordan Institute and MSC Current Issues Awareness

Persons with disabilities please call 845-1515 to inform us of your special needs. We request notification three (3) working days prior to the event to enable us to assist you to the best of our abilities.



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