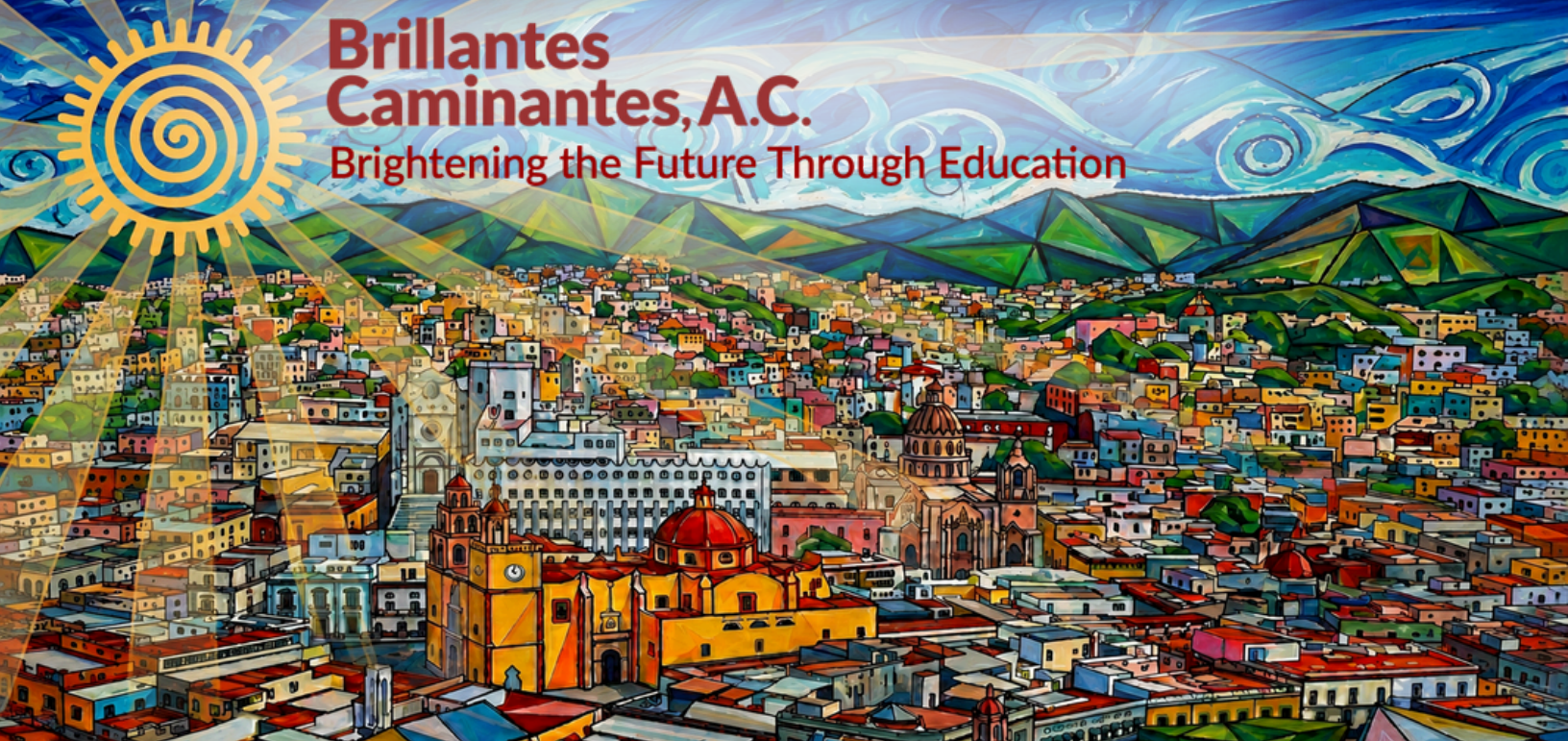




Brillantes Caminantes, A.C.

Brightening the Future Through Education

BC Newsletter, July 2026

A Word from the President

Summer has arrived and another academic year has ended. While our current students enjoy a couple of months' vacation from their studies, the admissions committee is hard at work selecting the next group of mentees to join us, all of whom will start in August.

Our ability to take on new college students every year depends on our capacity to support them. Giving monthly *becas*, or scholarships, is only part of what we do. This year we received 32 applicants. I wish BC could help all these deserving young people, but we simply lack consistent volunteer involvement.

Over the past five years, several members took positions on our board but moved away or had to resign. All that churn is exhausting, but still, we continue to assist as many students as possible.

In this issue we have an article written by longtime mentor David Rosen, who looks back at his decade of mentoring



BC's Ana Muñoz, Pamela Naessig, Jennifer Rodriguez Vega enjoy World Cup fever in Mexico City

three different BC scholarship recipients. We are grateful to David and to several others who mentored students, but are now retiring. We truly need assistance: event volunteers, mentors, donors, and more. Can you or someone you know step up to ensure the future of Brillantes Caminantes? Tell your friends about our wonderful organization.

Viva México, both on the pitch, and in our schools!

-Pamela Naessig

David Rosen, Three-Time Mentor

I think it would be useful for me to share my experiences as a BC mentor with people who are interested in becoming active in Brillantes Caminates. I have mentored three students who were as different from each other as it is possible to imagine.

It all started about 10 years ago, when BC's former mentor coordinator asked if I could tutor Leti, a veterinary student, to read English-language veterinary articles. Since I studied animal science and received a graduate degree in medical microbiology at a veterinary college, I replied, "If I can't, who can?"

The BC Mentor Coordinator told me Leti had some challenges that made it difficult for her to speak to people she didn't know well. My wife, Sunday, and I were introduced to Leti and the three of us got right to work. Leti couldn't speak English but she could understand a lot of what I said. I spoke to her in English and when she didn't understand, in Spanish.

We worked with animal physiology and biological chemistry books from my library. I made photocopies of the passages we used, and read two or three sentences to her aloud. She told me in Spanish what I had just said in English. We continued this way until she started showing up with copies of articles from veterinary journals. Leti was intelligent and eager to learn, the kind of student who is a joy to work with.

BC students sometimes have neglected medical or dental needs. I noticed that she had a missing tooth and asked when she last saw a dentist. She replied, "Nunca," [Never].



Edgar Alfredo Lona Macias, David Rosen

BC arranged to pay for an appointment, I took her to the dentist, and when I was finally called in she sat in front of a computer screen with pictures and x-rays, tears streaming down her face. Her mouth was a wreck. She had four baby teeth that never came out, and were now decayed down to the bone, with nothing underneath to replace them. She also had three serious cavities and needed orthodontia (braces).

Leti had even more troubles. She had to pass an English exam to graduate, and when I asked her to get more information, I learned that she couldn't even talk to her teachers. We consulted a special education teacher in Seattle who said Leti's issue sounded like an anxiety disorder called Selective Mutism (SM).

After some Internet searches we learned SM often responds to psychotherapy. While it is not the norm, a mentor will sometimes assist their student in obtaining counseling. Brillantes referred Leti to a psychotherapist who worked with her for about a year, and she improved dramatically!

Once Leti could actually communicate with teachers and administrators, we learned she would have to pass

the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam to graduate. I ordered some TOEFL test preparation books and we got to work again. Leti not only graduated with honors, but her grades were also so high she was excused from writing a thesis. She realized her dream and now works at a veterinary clinic in Irapuato.

My second story as a mentor is short and unhappy. This student was in his fourth year as an experimental biology major. His grades sank, he seemed to be more interested in playing basketball than studying, and he was irresponsible about keeping appointments with his previous mentor. The BC Risk Committee decided that if his grades averaged below 90% in the current semester, he would lose his BC scholarship. He missed this goal and failed a class. He was a very rare example of a student who did not continue in BC.

My last student, Edgar, is finishing his final year at the Technological Institute of Guanajuato in Puentecillas. He and his younger sister live with their single mother, who supports the family by cleaning houses in Guanajuato. Edgar took his responsibility to contribute to his family seriously and works weekends in the kitchen of a chicken restaurant. Still, he maintained a good grade point average.

He takes three buses to get to school and to return home to the countryside. I know nothing about industrial engineering, which made it virtually impossible to advise him about his studies or future employment but I did always stress that he must seek advice from his teachers, and that he must ask questions so that his teachers get to know him.

I am sure other BC students differ from any of my three in unforeseeable and wondrous ways.

Edgar's Farewell

Edgar Alfredo Lona Macías
Instituto Tecnológico Superior de Guanajuato
Ingeniería Industrial

I am a graduate of Industrial Engineering from the Technological Institute of Guanajuato. I am deeply grateful to Brillantes Caminantes for their support throughout my education and for allowing me to be part of this organization, where I learned and met new people, especially my mentor David Rosen, who was always there for me during my university studies.

I learned about Brillantes Caminantes through my high school, as they provided me with enough information to understand the organization and its mission. Since I met some of the requirements, I took the opportunity, and today I am grateful to have been selected for the Brillantes Caminantes scholarship.

Each meeting offered me new experiences, whether through the experiences of my fellow students, the way the sessions were prepared, or the new knowledge I gained on topics I hadn't considered during my professional and personal development.

Therefore, I am very grateful to Brillantes Caminantes, as they supported me every step of the way, enabling me to achieve my goals throughout this entire process.

Brillantes Caminantes is not only financial support, but it also helps you grow professionally and personally; it is a unique and unforgettable experience. I am deeply grateful for the profound positive impact it had on my life.

-Edgar Alfredo Lona Macías



Brayan's Farewell



Brayan Miguel Lona Zamaripa

Being part of this program has been one of the most significant experiences of my university years. From the beginning of my industrial engineering studies until now, as I am about to graduate, I have had constant support that has allowed me to focus on my studies and move forward with greater peace of mind toward my academic and professional goals.

One of the most valuable aspects of the program was the financial support I received to cover essential expenses such as transportation, food, and other university-related costs. This support made a significant difference during my university career, as it allowed me to continue my studies with greater stability. Throughout my participation in the program, I always felt the support of the organization. I am grateful that they were

always attentive to any situation related to my university life and also to personal matters when necessary. The change of mentors was never a problem for me. With Silvia Salas, I always felt very well supported; I received excellent guidance and support during an important stage of my education. Later, with Deborah Kallen, I found the same commitment, support, and human warmth. With her, I had the added benefit of being able to practice my English more, which was a great help in further developing my communication skills and gaining more confidence in the language.

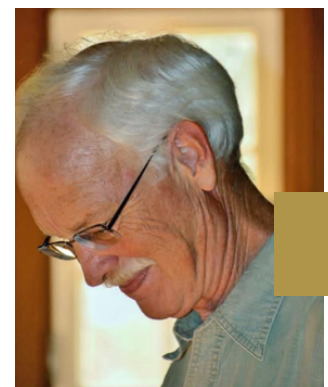
I'm now in a stage of my life that I'm really enjoying and where I feel very comfortable. Currently, in addition to being about to finish my university degree, I have the opportunity to share one of my greatest passions: music. Along with my father and brother, I'm part of a musical group that sings and participates in various events, an experience that strengthened our family bonds and allowed me to continue developing in something I'm passionate about. I also play soccer during the week on three different teams, an activity that helps me stay active and enjoy time with others and for recreation. Today, I feel I've found a good balance between university, music, and sports, which has allowed me to grow both professionally and personally. Without a doubt, this combination of activities brings me satisfaction, motivation, and a very positive balance in my life.

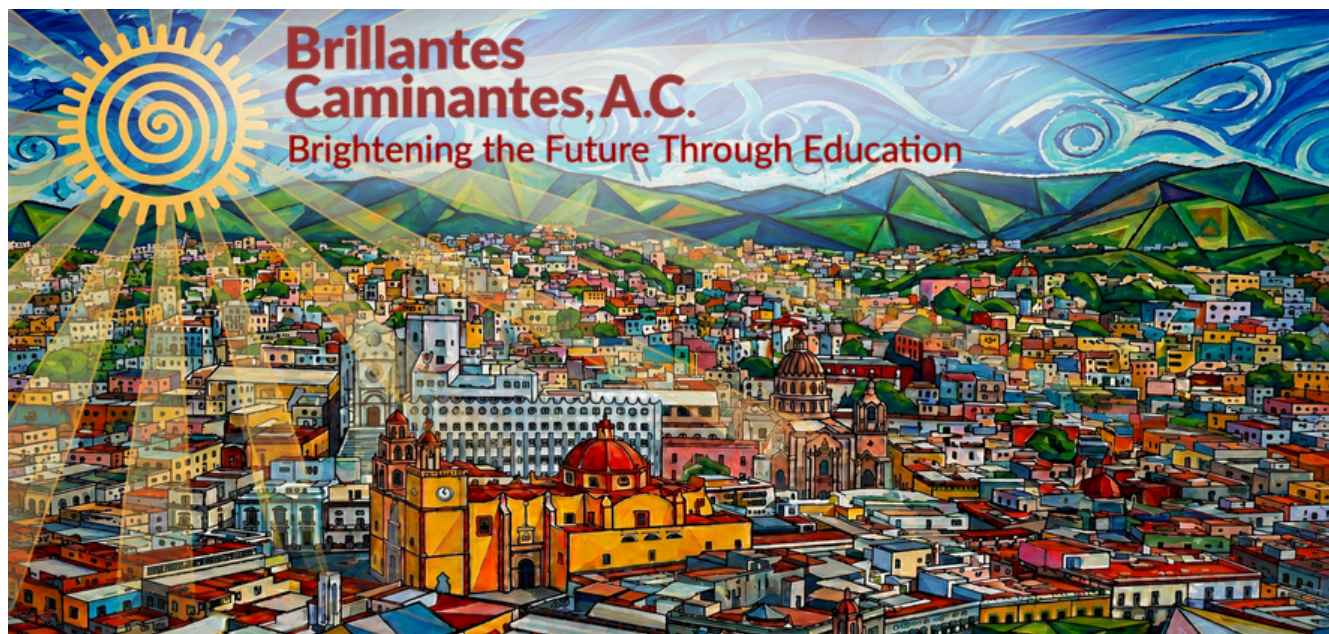
Today, as I conclude this stage, I feel extremely grateful to the organization for having trusted in me and for supporting me throughout my university journey, from beginning to end. Thank you for providing me with tools, guidance, and opportunities that significantly contributed to my development. This program not only helped me achieve my university goals but also allowed me to grow as a person and build experiences that I will cherish throughout my professional and personal life. Finally, thanks to Brillantes Caminantes, I was able to complete my university studies while continuing to develop my skills in music and sports, activities that are a very important part of my life.

-Brayan Miguel Lona Zamaripa

Kenneth Wayne MacDonald served as Secretary of Brillantes Caminantes for many years and was a devoted supporter of our organization. He passed away recently in Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Ken will be remembered fondly by many throughout the BC community, and we send our sincerest condolences to his husband, Gregg Friedberg. Ken asked that donations be made to Brillantes Caminantes.

lucasbatton.com/obituaries/ken-macdonald





Learn more about Brillantes Caminantes, our students, and our mission at BCgto.org—or support our work with a donation at BCgto.org/donate.

Credits

Thanks to our graduating students and members who contributed to this issue of the newsletter.

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