



Front row left to right: Maria Rodriguez-Casas, PhD, Rita Zamora, Serah Garza, & Anthony Argueta. Second row left to right: Crystal Ramirez-Garcia, John Garcia, Humberto Cruz III, Derrick Duarte, Richard Patton, & Megan Kolbe. Third row: Connie Herrera, Justin Navarro, Jose Carbajal, Tristan Hinojosa, James Garza, Ryan Villarreal, & Nathan Rodriguez. Top row left to right: Melissa Landin, Robin Kennedy, Andy Garza, Justo Rodriguez, Raul M. Ramirez, Richard Wright, Diana Sheeran, & Rick Ruiz. Not pictured: Jasmyn Garcia & Christopher Garcia

## **Local Leaders Honor Graduates of Los Mesteños/BCISD Summer Training Program**

Celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> annual summer youth training program, officials of Los Mesteños Career Academy (LMCA) and Brooks County Independent School District (BCISD) gathered with students' friends and families in the Falfurrias High School Cafeteria to honor this year's graduates. Raul Ramirez served as master of ceremonies and introduced dignitaries in the audience which included Superintendent Casas, Principal Wright, Counselor Herrera, Mayor Justo Rodriguez, City Manager Melissa Landin, Luis Peña with Brush Country GCD, and LMCA board members Sylvia Chavez, Andy Garza and Robin Kennedy.

Instructor Megan Kolbe praised the students for their hard work and the advances each had made during the five-week training and job program. "They learned how to function in the real working world and they mastered technical skills in a very short time", she said. Ms. Kolbe added that the students,

selected on a competitive basis to participate, amazed her with their ability to learn how to read plans and use math and functional skills to construct some complicated and beautiful furniture. “The octagonal picnic tables were especially complex and they all learned from perseverance, reasoning and teamwork how to measure, cut and assemble the pieces in precise shapes and dimensions”, she said.

LMCA Director Crystal Ramirez-Garcia, before awarding certificates of training the students earned in several intensive days of training through the Craft Training Center, gave special recognition to Instructor Kolbe and the students’ parents. “This may have been our most successful summer program ever thanks to the skill and enthusiasm of Ms. Kolbe and the motivation and dedication instilled by the parents”, she said. Ms. Ramirez-Garcia concluded her remarks with a special thanks to Ms. Robin Kennedy and her family for enabling the summer program to continue in the face of drastic cuts by a traditional funding source.

Upcoming LMCA training opportunities can be found at [losmestenos.org](http://losmestenos.org).