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## Church holds fundraiser to help future scientist



**Daniela Garcia stands in the Fellowship Hall of First United Methodist of Chiefland on Sunday (Jan. 29) as church members enjoy a fundraiser luncheon to help her pay for her trip this summer to Boston to attend a prestigious science-oriented event. Before taking a few minutes for an interview, she was among the people on the other side of a serving area as she dished out delicious Mexican food.**

**Story and Photo By Jeff M. Hardison © Jan. 29, 2017 at 4:17 p.m.**

**CHIEFLAND** -- The congregation at First United Methodist Church of Chiefland held a fundraiser lunch Sunday (Jan. 29) to help a high school student attend a prestigious event this summer.

The luncheon menu was based on authentic Mexican cuisine.

Daniela Garcia, 17, a junior at Chiefland High School, is scheduled to attend the Congress of Future Scientists and Technologists in Boston from June 28 to July 1.

This young lady is the daughter of Omar Garcia and Mayra Cruz, and she is one of only 4,000 high school students from around the nation who was selected to attend this significant event.

Daniela Garcia said she hopes to raise enough money to bring her mother on the trip too.

The National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists just recently announced the speakers' and mentors' names for this year's honors-only Congress audience of high school students, and those speakers and mentors include Nobel Laureates, captains of industry, peer science competition winners and Ivy League educators.

The schedule of Grand Masters include: J. Craig Venter, Ph.D., National Medal of Science recipient and world-renowned genomist; David Wineland, Ph.D, winner of Nobel Prize in Physics, and National Medal of Science recipient; John C. Mather, Ph.D., winner of Nobel Prize in Physics, and National Medal of Science recipient; Ray Kurzweil, National Medal of Technology recipient, and director of engineering with

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Google; Dean Kamen, legendary inventor of the Segway and the Drug Infusion Pump, and National Medal of Technology and Innovation recipient; Dennis Crowley, CEO and co-founder of Foursquare; Cherry Murray, Ph.D., dean of Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, 2009-2014, and National Medal of Technology and Innovation recipient; Bill Westenhofer, two-time Oscar winner for Best Visual Effects; Helen Grenier, co-founder of iRobot, CEO of CyPhyWorks; Mike Rhodin, senior vice president of IBM Watson; Vanessa Green, CEO and co-founder of FINsix; and Jon Gosier, CEO and founder of Appfrica, and a TED Fellow.

Daniela Garcia said she has been in Chiefland for six or seven months now. She hopes to major in the study of genetics when she goes to college. As for which college she wants to attend, she is still looking at institutions all over the nation.

The Academy was founded on the belief that the scientific community must identify prospective talent at the earliest possible age and help students acquire the necessary experience and skills to take them to the doorstep of vital careers in science and technology.

American hero and astronaut Buzz Aldrin, who just recently celebrated his 87th birthday, is the Academy Science director. As one of the leading space exploration advocates, Aldrin continues to chart a course for future space travel and is passionate about inspiring the younger generations of future explorers and originators.

Richard Rossi is the Academy executive director. Rossi is a veteran creator of learning experiences for high-achieving young people.

The National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists is based in Harvard University Square, Cambridge, Mass., and has an office in Washington, D.C.