

News Writing

District Meet • 2021



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School. From the given information, write a **news story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. You have **45 minutes**. Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School has 1,400 students enrolled in grades 9-12. In early March, Luis Corona, the district's groundskeeper, died after an accident involving a tractor mower. Corona was preparing to mow the school's athletic fields when the accident occurred. Police investigated the accident and found no foul play.

Corona, who was 58, had worked for the school district for 31 years. He started as a custodian at the elementary school and worked his way up to head groundskeeper for the district. He was a graduate of Leaguetown and lived here his entire life.

After the accident, the athletic booster clubs and the Parent-Teacher Association donated \$2,000 to help pay for Corona's funeral. Because of the pandemic, the funeral was a family-only ceremony.

When Corona was a student at Leaguetown, he was a first baseman on the baseball team. After he graduated, he attended almost every home game. He only missed a few when he or a family member was ill. The baseball team will hold a Hit-A-Thon fundraiser Friday, April 9, to raise money for a scholarship in Corona's name. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Tuesday, March 30.

■ ROBYN BYRD, principal

"Our community suffered a great loss when Mr. Corona passed. Not only was he an important member of our district staff, he loved this school and the students. Our athletic fields are some of the best maintained in the county because of him. He also was our most dedicated baseball fan. In my 10 years here at the school, I have never been to a baseball game where he wasn't in attendance, and he didn't just watch the games. He knew every single player's name, their stats and their parents' names.

"A scholarship in his name is a great way to honor him. I am proud of the boys for stepping up. I am saddened that we all couldn't attend his funeral. It would have been standing room only."

■ ROGELIO AGUIRRE, varsity baseball coach

"Telling the baseball team that Mr. Corona had passed was the hardest thing I've had to do in my coaching career. Every player was torn up. The boys loved him, and he loved them. He was more than a fan to them. He was part of our family. The scholarship and fundraiser was their idea. I am so very proud of them."

■ CHARLIE WILLIAMS, senior and varsity baseball player

“All three teams — freshmen, junior varsity and varsity — will participate in the Hit-A-Thon. Each player will get 10 pitches from the pitching machine. For the fundraiser, people pledge an amount for each hit a player gets, or people can donate a set amount. For example, my dad signed up for \$5 a hit. If I get 10 hits, he will donate \$50. Our goal is to raise \$2,500 for the scholarship, and we hope this becomes an annual event. Since everyone can’t attend the fundraiser because of the pandemic, we are going to stream the Hit-A-Thon live on our team Facebook page.

“We created a link on the school’s baseball website for people to make their pledges. Coach said the player who raises the most money will get one week off from sprints. That is serious motivation, but we don’t need much. We all loved Mr. Corona. His memory is our motivation.

“When I heard that Mr. Corona had died, I didn’t want to believe it. He was like our team parent. He always made sure the field was in perfect condition, and he attended every game. I can’t remember him ever missing a game. Rain or cold. Sleet or snow. He was always there – cheering for us.”

■ JAYLEE DONATELLI, broadcast journalism teacher

“When I heard Mr. Corona had died, my heart broke a little. He wasn’t just an amazing groundskeeper and baseball fan. He was a great man who always had a smile on his face. He cared about everyone. His funeral should have been packed with students and teachers.

“My students are working the baseball team to film the Hit-A-Thon so people can watch it on the team’s Facebook page. We will make sure his wife gets a copy of the video, too.”

■ BRANDON JAMES, junior and varsity baseball player

“I play first base like Mr. Corona. After every game, he would wait for me to leave the dugout and then tell me what a great game I had. If I made an error during the game, he would give me encouragement and tips for improving. He never yelled at any player and was always such a positive force for the entire team. We will miss him.”

■ ANGELICA CORONA, wife of Luis Corona

“The outpouring of love and support has been overwhelming. Luis loved the school, the students and the community.

“This has been a very tough time for my sons and me, but we have been so touched by everything. I know Luis is smiling in heaven at the thought of a scholarship in his name. I can’t think of a better way to honor him.”

■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

His two sons, Juan and Roberto, played baseball at Leaguetown High School, and now both are high school baseball coaches in East Texas.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

DISTRICT • 2021

NEWS WRITING CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLE STORY

Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during critique/judging. Also, staple one copy of the contest and one copy of the contest tips to each student's returned entry. The purpose of the tips is to provide immediate feedback to students. However, it is not meant to replace written comments from the judge.

1. As a general rule, open with a future lead. Here, the story comes out before the Hit-A-Thon and before the video is finished.

To honor former groundskeeper Luis Corona, the baseball team will hold a Hit-A-Thon April 9, to raise money for a scholarship in his name. Corona, 58, died during a tractor mowing accident in March.

2. Use direct quotes early in the story. After you introduce quotes, use the transition/quote formula. Be sure you attribute after the quote. An attribution should be: subject of attribution followed by the verb of attribution ("Byrd said," not "said Byrd.") Avoid stacking quotes. Avoid putting two or more quotes from different people together without placing a transition between them. Also, make sure transitions provide information and the quote does not repeat information revealed in the transition.

transition

Corona graduated from Leaguetown and was an avid baseball fan. He played first base for the team when he was in high school, and both of his sons, who are now high school baseball coaches, played for the school.

direct quote

"In my 10 years here at the school, I have never been to a baseball game where he wasn't in attendance, and he didn't just watch the games," Byrd said. "He knew every single player's name, their stats and their parents' names."

transition

Varsity baseball coach Rogelio Aguire said telling the team of Corona's death was the hardest thing he's ever had to do.

direct quote

"Every player was torn up," he said. "The boys loved him, and he loved them. He was more than a fan to them. He was part of our family. The scholarship and fundraiser was their idea."

3. Use third person. Don't say "our students" or "our principal Robyn Byrd" or "Some of our students ..." Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say "The team is so sad ..." without attributing that quote to someone.

4. Note how in the earlier example of transition/quote, each quote is its own paragraph. Don't be afraid to use one or two-sentence paragraphs.

SAMPLE STORY

To honor former groundskeeper Luis Corona, the baseball team will hold a Hit-A-Thon April 9, to raise money for a scholarship in his name. Corona, 58, died during a tractor mowing accident in March.

“Our community suffered a great loss when Mr. Corona passed,” Principal Robyn Byrd said. “Not only was he an important member of our district staff, he loved this school and the students. A scholarship in his name is a great way to honor him. I am proud of the boys for stepping up.”

Corona graduated from Leaguetown and was an avid baseball fan. He played first base for the team when he was in high school, and both of his sons, who are now high school baseball coaches, played for the school.

“In my 10 years here at the school, I have never been to a baseball game where he wasn’t in attendance, and he didn’t just watch the games,” Byrd said. “He knew every single player’s name, their stats and their parents’ names.”

Varsity baseball coach Rogelio Aguire said telling the team of Corona’s death was the hardest thing he’s ever had to do.

“Every player was torn up,” he said. “The boys loved him, and he loved them. He was more than a fan to them. He was part of our family. The scholarship and fundraiser was their idea.”

Senior baseball player Charlie Williams said Corona was like a team parent and always made sure the field was in perfect condition.

“I can’t remember him ever missing a game,” Williams said. “Rain or cold. Sleet or snow. He was always there – cheering for us. Our goal is to raise \$2,500 for the scholarship, and we hope this becomes an annual event.”

For the Hit-A-Thon, players will get 10 pitches from the pitching machine. The team set up a link on the school’s baseball website where people can select a player and pick an amount to pledge per hit or donate a set amount of money.

“Coach said the player who raises the most money will get one week off from sprints,” Williams said. “That is serious motivation, but we didn’t need much. We all loved Mr. Corona. His memory is our motivation.”

Corona’s wife, Angelica Corona, said the love and support from the school has been “overwhelming.”

“Luis loved the school, the students and the community,” she said. “This has been a very tough time for my sons and me, but we have been so touched by everything. I know Luis is smiling in heaven at the thought of a scholarship in his name.”

After the accident, the athletic booster clubs and the Parent-Teacher Association donated \$2,000 to help pay for Corona’s funeral, which only family could attend because of the pandemic.

“His funeral should have been packed with students and teachers,” broadcast journalism teacher Jaylee Donatelli said. “He wasn’t just an amazing groundskeeper and baseball fan. He was a great man who always had a smile on his face. He cared about everyone.”

Because attendance will be limited at the Hit-A-Thon, Donatelli’s students are working with the baseball team to film the Hit-A-Thon and stream it live on Facebook.

“We will make sure his wife gets a copy of the video, too,” she said.