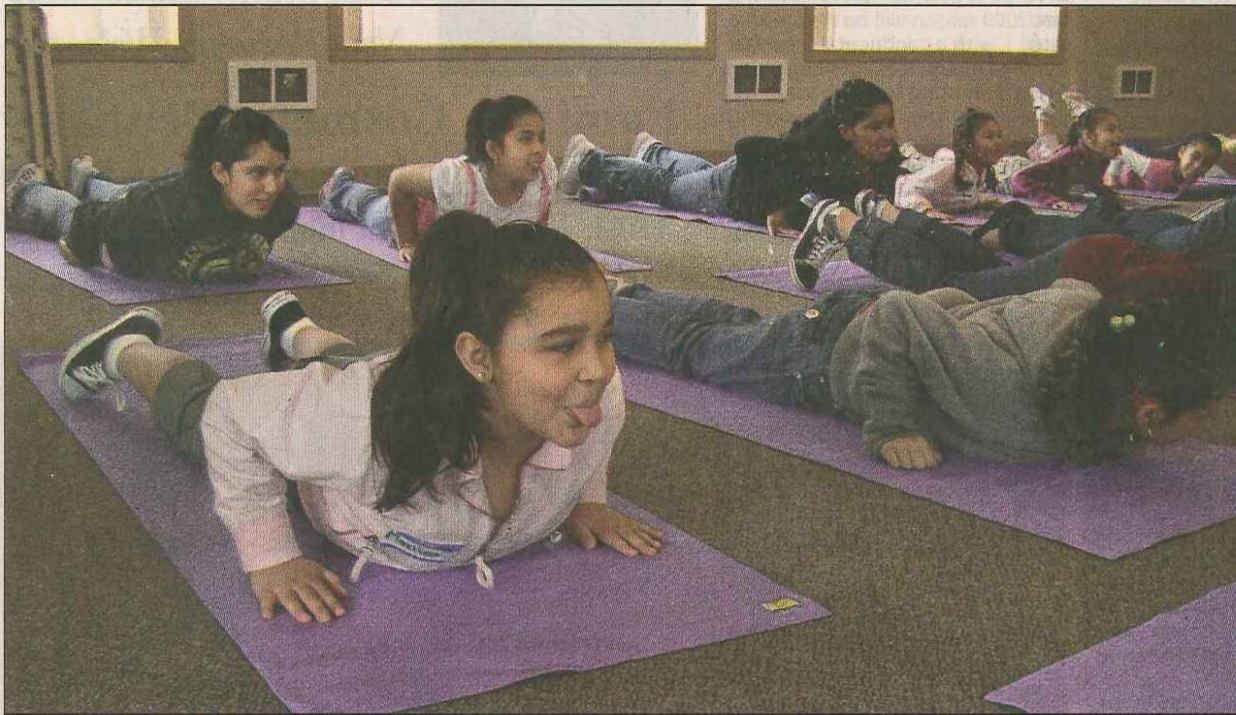


HILLSBORO IN FOCUS

From the **Hillsboro Argus**

Winning With the Teen Latina Team



Monica Salazar (above) tries a yoga cobra pose, complete with snake tongue, at a spring break "camp" for girls who live in a farmer worker apartment complex in the Reedville area.

JoAnn Boatwright
The Argus

Girl Scouts offer girls from farm worker families a chance to celebrate spring break

By JoAnn Boatwright
The Argus

During spring break 2009 and Maricela Nava might have been hanging out with her friends before heading off to her part-time job at a nearby Safeway.

Instead, Maricela worked with a gaggle of dark-haired little girls dressed mostly in pinks and purples who switch from a rousing game of Duck, Duck, Goose to yoga to crafts to puppet shows.

The 18-year-old Century High School senior needs community service hours in order to graduate, but she's finding more than the required hours as part of the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington's Teen Latina Team (TLT).

"Working with the girls

is fun," Nava said. "They have a lot of energy."

Nava is one of several high school girls recruited through word-of-mouth and admitted through an application process by Bernice Rivera, the Hispanic initiative manager for the Portland-based Girl Scout council. The high school girls practice leadership and organizational skills while planning activities

for girls in kindergarten through seventh grade.

Maricela, like every other girl in the room, is from a farm worker family. Born in Mexico, she moved to the Hillsboro area six years ago and has an eye on a career in business.

"I thank God for the opportunities that are right here," said Maricela, who plans to study accounting at Portland Community

College before transferring to Oregon State University, where her brother is a student.

The program, Rivera said, is designed to keep all of the girls busy as well as enriching their lives.

A full version of this story was printed in the March 27 edition of the Hillsboro Argus.