

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - July 26, 2001

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LUCK SEEMS TO RUN IN THE FAMILY

(Austin, July 26) - Maybe someone should look into whether "luck" is a genetic thing. Take the Valadez family, for instance. First, you have Refugio Valadez of Comfort who won more than \$7 million from the Texas Lottery Commission's Lotto Texas game in 1994. Now seven years later, his nephew, Gerardo Valadez of San Antonio, has won \$1,000 a week for 20 years from the lottery's instant game, *Weekly Grand*.

"I just can't believe it," said Gerardo Valadez. "When I got home and told my wife 'I just won a \$1,000 a week,' she didn't believe it either."

Valadez scratched his way to fame coming home one afternoon from his job at the Pico de Gallo restaurant, where he has been a waiter for more than six years. He purchased his usual *Weekly Grand* ticket at Ingram Mart, located at 6850 Ingram Road in San Antonio.

"I scratched the first section and didn't win anything," Valadez said. "Then I saw the three 'Grands' come up in the middle section (of the ticket). It was so unexpected."

According to Valadez, he had told his wife, Nora, just a few days before that he felt he was going to hit something big soon. He had won \$300 from *Weekly Grand* a month ago. "It's such a weird feeling," he said.

Valadez says he still remembers when his uncle won the *Lotto* years ago. Coming from Mexico and having no formal education, his uncle owned and ran a contracting company, Valadez explained. He grew up watching his uncle work hard and make something of his life here in the United States. Valadez himself began working summers for his uncle when he was 12 years old.

"He's always tried to better himself," said Valadez. "He and my aunt were very excited when they heard about this. They've always been very nice to me."

Valadez explained he has very specific plans for his winnings. He plans to cut back on his workload and go to school. He has thought about following in his uncle's footsteps and going into some area of real estate. His wife plans on staying home to raise their three children.

In accordance with Texas Lottery procedures, the retailer who sold the top-prize winning *Weekly Grand* ticket is eligible to receive a bonus of \$10,000.

Weekly Grand, one of the lottery's most popular instant games, has been reissued a total of seven times and has produced 48 winners.

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The Texas Lottery, the 4th largest selling lottery in North America, is "Focusing on the Future of Education, One Ticket At A Time." By providing the 'Games of Texas' for more than 10 years, the Texas Lottery Commission (TLC) has generated more than \$10 billion for the state and paid nearly \$17 billion to players in prizes. For more information about the TLC, please visit the official website at <http://www.txlottery.org>