

Texas Lottery Commission Press Release - July 23, 2004

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First Winner Of Top Prize In *Instant Monopoly* Scratch Game Collects At Lottery HQ



Joe Sanchez of Austin, winner of the top prize in the Instant MONOPOLY scratch off game.

(Austin, July 23) - Joe Sanchez of Austin was in Luling picking up his mother Thursday morning to run an errand to the bank. On their way there, they stopped at the Big Diamond on Magnolia to buy gas, bought one *Instant Monopoly* ticket, and won \$25,000, the top prize in this new scratch ticket that was issued this week.

"I never play the Lottery, but my mother told me to spend the \$2 to buy one ticket," he said. "This prize couldn't have come at a better time. Now I don't have to worry about paying my medical bills at least for a few months. Winning this money gives me a great relief from the stress of worrying about my medical bills."

"This is when it's the best, when winning a Lottery prize helps our winner accomplish something that absolutely needs to get done," said Texas Lottery Commission Executive Director Reagan E. Greer. "We're always happy to help, especially in a case like this where the winner has some steep medical bills that need to be eliminated."

Sanchez and his mother, María Castruita of Luling, sat in the car and scratched the ticket. He thought he had won \$2,500.

"I thought it was great to win \$2,500, but my mother made the clerk scan the ticket and it said we'd won \$25,000," he said. "I kept saying to myself that it just couldn't be. We got so excited that we forgot to buy gas and came straight over to the Lottery."

Besides paying his medical bills, Sanchez plans to do one other thing.

"I want to help my brothers and sisters," he said. "My mother also wants me to have some fun. Maybe I'll think about going to Six Flags. "

For more information about the Texas Lottery, please visit the official Texas Lottery Commission Web site at <http://www.txlottery.org>

