

STAYING CONNECTED NEWSLETTER

Día de Los Muertos Celebrates Family, Friends, and Ancestors

Though the room was full of skulls, the mood was festive, the bread sweet, and the chocolate warm, as Seattle city employees and their friends celebrated Día de Los Muertos at Bertha Knight Landes room on Oct. 31.

The event, sponsored by the Latino City Employees, the National Urban Fellows, and the office of Councilmember Bruce Harrell, offered an afternoon of poetry, calavera satire, upbeat music, and the remembrance and celebration of lost relatives and friends.

The keynote presentation was by Raúl Sánchez, a Seattle poet who read from his debut book *All Our Brown-Skinned Angels*. He shared stories of braceros, discrimination and the struggle for social justice, the loss of a son, and other vignettes of the Mexican-American experience.



Magdaleno Rose-Avila, head of the Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, hosted the event, sharing personal stories of past Day of the Dead celebrations, and its historical and cultural significance in Mexican society.

Jacque Larrainzar performed traditional Mexican songs such as *La Llorona*, and shared memories of her Franco-Mexican relatives and their different yet similar ways of celebrating Día de Los Muertos.

Guests were treated to sweet bread, hot chocolate, and sugar skulls made by artist Amara Ibarra-Sandys.

The centerpiece of the event was an altar with pictures and mementos of friends and relatives who passed away, and dedicated to victims of violence in our communities.



Magdaleno Rose-Avila served as master of ceremonies

Latino Heritage Award Recognizes Filmmakers



Mario Zavaleta and Martha Sánchez

The purpose of the Latino City Employees organization is to promote cultural awareness and diversity.

Documentarians Mario Zavaleta and Martha Sánchez were honored last year with the Eighth Annual Latino Heritage Award at an Oct. 6 celebration at Club SUR.

The Latino Heritage Award Celebration is LCE's yearly educational and cultural event. Mayor McGinn presented the awards, which recognize leadership and service in the Seattle Latino community.

Mario and Martha started their journey in the Pacific Northwest in Alaska with the promise of good fortune in fishing and as struggling restaurant owners. Mario also bought a video camera and started to capture the life of Latinos in Alaska. The story was picked up by Univision and ran world-wide.

They eventually moved to Seattle, where they documented the work, lives, struggles and successes of Latinos from Oregon to Montana. Some of their work

includes films about community organizing in South Park, folkloric dancers, and a history of the Latino activists at the University of Washington in 1968.

The event's keynote speaker was Washington State Supreme Court Justice Steven González. He delivered an impassioned speech about the persistence of bias against Latinos, exemplified by how he lost 30 of 39 counties in the Nov. 8 election to Bruce Danielson, an inexperienced, unqualified, and unfunded opponent. González still won the election.

González emphasized the importance of education, mentoring, and community involvement to counter bias and increase opportunities for Latinos.

The program also included performances by Guelaguetza folkloric ballet, Jacque Larrainzar, Orquesta Cambalache and DJ Diego.

Sonia Palma Joins RSJI Office

Sonia Palma has joined the Seattle Office for Civil Rights as a temporary employee to work on the Race and Social Justice Initiative.



Sonia has been an active member of the Seattle Department of Transportation's RSJI Change Team, is a leader in the Latino City Employees, and has extensive experience engaging communities in civic participation. Her RSJI expertise and

experience within a department will be much appreciated, along with her strong project management skills. She started her new assignment in mid October, 2012. working approximately 20 hours per week.

Sonia will provide technical assistance and policy analysis for the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). Other duties include developing and delivering presentations and reports regarding the Race and Social Justice Initiative to City departments, internal and external organizations, and developing and implementing policies and procedures.

LCE General Membership meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month.

LCE Elects New Board Members

The Latino City Employees elected new members to the Board of Directors in December 2012. They are:

Carlos Sanabria, Project Lead. Carlos is a Facilities Line of Business Representative with Seattle Public Utilities and has worked with the city of Seattle since 1991. He has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Washington and holds a Professional Engineering License in the state of Washington. He was born and raised in Argentina. Carlos is married to Cristina; they have three grandchildren— Dylan, Dulce, and Dánika from his daughter Ruth Irupé and her husband Isaí.

Fernando Platin Jr., Project Lead. Fernando is a Senior Civil Engineer with Seattle Public Utilities. He holds a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Central Florida and a master's degree in civil and environmental engineering from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Fernando is a registered Professional Civil Engineer in the states of Florida, Hawaii, Nevada and Washington. He

was born in the USA, but is of Colombian descent. His interests include North and South America traditions and cultures, sports, politics, and mentoring youth.

Flor Alarcon Avendano, commences her second year as Co-Chair . For the past 20 years, Flor has been a Counselor/Case Manager with the City of Seattle's Aging and Disability Services. She is a Geriatric Mental Health Specialist from the University of Washington. Flor worked for the UW School of Social Work and Social Development Research Group. Flor has served on several boards including the Alzheimer's Family Resource Advisory Board, Mujeres of the NW, Latino Basketball league and Seamar Community Health Care Centers. In her own time, Flor keeps busy with the Latino arts community and with her three children playing soccer, dancing, listening music and cooking for family and friends.

Sonia Palma continues as LCE's chair.

Upcoming Events

March 7-16, 8 p.m.

Mujeres de Arena, Presented by Latino Theater Projects – In Recognition of International Women's Day. Southside Commons, 3518 S. Edmunds St., Seattle

March 15, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Race: The Power of an Illusion Community Training, Cleveland High School (cafeteria) 5511 15th Ave. S., Seattle.

April 2, 6 – 8 p.m.

Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board Meeting, Seattle City Hall

April 5, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

A Roll of a Dice: Racial Disproportionality in King County and Washington State - Phinney Neighborhood Center

April 11, 6 – 8pm

Municipal League Civic Awards ceremony, E Renaissance Hotel, 515 Madison St., Seattle.

April 12 – 14, 11 a.m. – 10 p.m.

World Rhythm Festival, Seattle Center 305 Harrison St., Seattle.

April 26, 2013, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project anniversary celebration, Westin Seattle, 1900 5th Ave., Seattle.

May 2, 11:30 a.m.

Cinco de Mayo fundraiser. Seattle Municipal Tower, 4050/60.

"Our language is the reflection of ourselves. A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers."
Cesar Chávez

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