



October 2006

LA VOZ

La Alianza Hispana's Newsletter



Dear Friends and Colleagues:

October is Hispanic Heritage month—it's a time to recognize leaders and activists who have lessened barriers and created opportunities for Latinos. Our struggles and accomplishments are many and we must give thanks to people like César Chavez, Labor Activist and founder of the United Farm Workers Union; Esmerelda Santiago, award-winning writer and producer; Jeffrey Sánchez, Massachusetts State Representative; and Jovita Fontanez, the first Hispanic woman to serve as head of the Boston Election Commission and the first Hispanic woman to be a member of the Electoral College of Massachusetts. These men and women, like many others, have demonstrated a strong commitment to social change at national, state and local levels.

In the "La Alianza Family" we have been privileged to benefit from the leadership of people like Freida García, Founder of La Alianza Hispana; Nelson Merced, former Executive Director and currently the Director of National Initiatives and Applied Research for NeighborWorks; and William "Willie" Rodriguez, our Executive Director for the past five years. I would like to take this opportunity to specifically recognize Willie's contributions to La Alianza and the Boston area Latino community. In the September issue of *La Voz* (The Voice) we shared with you that Willie has transitioned from the Executive Director position to a new role as a consultant for La Alianza's leadership. During Willie's tenure, he introduced a number of new initiatives that were visionary in terms of meeting the social and economic needs of Boston's Latino community. I would like to highlight four of these programs that continue to be an important resource in the community:

PACE - The Partnership for Automotive Career Education is a workforce initiative that provides training and career placement in the automotive industry. PACE, funded through a generous grant from The Boston Foundation, is a collaborative partnership with the Urban

League of Eastern Massachusetts and the Asian American Civic Association. Today, La Alianza continues to recruit and prepare candidates in a holistic way for employment opportunities in this industry.



PACE candidates in an orientation & training session at La Alianza Hispana

LASI – Latino After School Initiative is an after school collaboration with six other Latino youth-serving organizations. The goal is to increase resources for underserved youth. La Alianza's program, Club Latino, is onsite at the Lilla Fredericks Pilot Middle School in Dorchester. Staff and volunteers provide comprehensive services to middle school students as well as parent-led workshop for the students' families. The program is in its third year of operation and is an innovative approach to serve underserved youth. Today, La Alianza Hispana continues to provide a whole brain learning approach to twenty students which identify youths' skill strengths and learning styles, and build these skills through academic and vocational programming to stem poverty, school drop out rates and violence in the local Latino community.



LASI youth at the Museum of Science

Puerto Rican Epidemiologic Study, a partnership between Tufts University, Northeastern University and La Alianza Hispana, is a statewide study on the nutritional needs of Puerto Rican seniors. La Alianza has assisted in the investigation and recruitment of over 1200 participants, outlining health disparities and issues affecting the nutrition of seniors. The preliminary findings of the study will be presented on December 4th at Tufts University. Today, La Alianza continues to help bring attention and visibility to the needs of its seniors and more importantly, the results of the studies will help the agency design intervention strategies that will help build the elders program to uniquely address nutritional issues in the Latino

community.

Workplace Education Services and Vocational English Curriculum In 2004, La Alianza redesigned its curriculum to be more current with the trends in workforce development and English language instruction. This afforded La Alianza the opportunity to expand its English as a Second Language Program and to develop new business opportunities with the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Massachusetts Training Fund, the Corporation for Public Management, and the Harbor Point Columbia Tenant Association to provide customized vocational English instruction. Today, La Alianza is partnering with Morgan Linen, a commercial laundry company, to provide needed vocational English language instruction to its employees and to help them access career ladders at the company.

These initiatives have made of our organization stronger and more responsive to community needs. On behalf of the staff and constituents we serve, we want to honor and show appreciation of Willie's service and commitment to the Latino community.

With gratitude and solidarity,



Janet Collazo

Message from Willie



It is with great pride and confidence that I leave you in the capable hands of our new Interim Executive Director, Janet Collazo. I will continue to be involved in helping to strengthen La Alianza. As is true with previous La Alianza leaders, you can transition out of a "job" but that doesn't change the fact that you are part of the family at La Alianza. I know I will always belong to this spirited and hopeful community which is constantly growing through its dedicated staff and courageous constituents.

I am truly grateful for the unwavering commitment of La Alianza's staff. With the successes I have witnessed in the last five years, there have been struggles too. I have the deepest respect for all the staff members who have risen to many occasions with a "can-do" attitude, innovative thinking and great compassion. Being part of this team has been an invigorating and rewarding experience—it has truly been a gift.

I am so thankful for our long-term funding partners like the Boston Foundation, The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and The Hyams Foundation. These funders have been an integral part in making positive changes in the Latino community and at La Alianza. I also want to express my sincere appreciation to our community based organization colleagues; many of whom have mentored and supported me throughout the last five years. La Alianza's Board of Directors has stood behind me with support and guidance and I thank them for their

leadership.

As my journey continues, I bring with me a renewed spirit of advocacy for justice and equality. I will pursue a place that allows me to invest its resources in organizations like La Alianza. I look forward to maintaining those wonderful relationships I have established while Executive Director. It has truly been an honor to serve at La Alianza.

"United in a collective voice we shall overcome the challenges and any barriers that lie ahead." "Si Se Puede"

Very truly yours,

William Rodríguez

Appreciation for Willie



Alberto Cárdenas, President of the Board "On behalf of the Board of

Directors of La Alianza Hispana, I'd like to thank you for your commitment, dedication and perseverance to our organization. As we reflect on your tenure as Executive Director and your relationship with La Alianza, what we remember most is your vibrant, deep and compelling vision for our community.

Leadership has many faces. A large part of leadership is vision; and that you have given us abundantly. Another is commitment; which you have given almost to excess. A third is enthusiasm for the work; and that has been your hallmark. You brought us great knowledge and understanding of the complexities of our contemporary urban Latino culture and you helped us to think strategically about options and opportunities to better serve our community.

You leave us with a heightened sense of the enduring value that La Alianza Hispana represents to our constituents and a renewed enthusiasm with which to face the challenges that lay ahead. For all of this and more, we are grateful. We thank you for the words of encouragement, the optimism when the difficulties seemed overwhelming and most of all for your inspiring leadership. We wish you every success in your next professional adventure."



Don Julio Rivera, Volunteer at the Senior Center of La Alianza. *"Willie was an excellent administrator and always accessible to the staff and the clients." He always came to our place to talk to us and keep us informed."*



María Elisa Avellaneda, Program Activities Coordinator, La Alianza's Senior Center. *"The people dedicated to help the communities will always be remembered because they are unquestionably very special people and certainly that is the case with William Rodríguez."*



Felix Arroyo, Boston City Councilor At Large. *"Willie had a great commitment to the services that La Alianza Hispana offers. He made La Alianza his own project and La Alianza made Willie part of it. Willie definitely left his positive footprint at La Alianza."*

CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY

On October 12th, Janet Collazo was invited by the **Federal Special Emphasis Program Coalition** to deliver the keynote address for their annual Hispanic Heritage Program. This year's theme was ***Hispanic Americans: Our Rich Culture Contributing to America's Future***. The audience consisted of representatives from **the Internal Revenue Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, Social Security Administration, and the Department of Citizens and Immigration Services**. This coalition of federal programs is dedicated to demonstrating the importance of diversity in the federal workforce.

In October, La Alianza received a full scholarship from the **Simmons School of Management** to attend their nationally recognized **Leading High Performance Teams** training. Janet Collazo was invited to join a strong group of women participants from Pfizer, Millennium, Verizon, Brigham & Women's and other non-profits for this three-day training. "The gift of this training couldn't have come at a better time! I am so grateful to Simmons to have this opportunity not only to learn new leadership skills but to have connect with such a talented and supportive group of women in management," said Janet Collazo, Interim Executive Director.

SAVE THE DATE!

Preliminary results of the Puerto Rican Epidemiologic Study

The Boston Puerto Rican Center on Population Health and Health Disparities at Tufts University, along with La Alianza Hispana and Northeastern University invite you to a light breakfast and presentation.

This breakfast will highlight the preliminary results of the health and nutritional status from more than 900 participants in a Puerto Rican Epidemiologic Study. This is the first time this research data will be available to the community.

When: Monday December 4, 2006

Time: 8:30 am to 10:30 am

**Where: Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University
711 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111**

Speakers:

Katherine L. Tucker, PhD, Director of the Boston Puerto Rican Center on Population Health and Health Disparities

Luis M. Falcon, PhD, Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Northeastern University

Jose Ordovas, PhD, Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University

William Rodríguez, La Alianza Hispana

Dr. Francisco Trillas, Director of Atreva Clinic

Invited Guests:

Representative Jeffrey Sánchez



Senator Jarrett Barrios
City Councilor Félix Arroyo

Don't miss this exiting opportunity to learn about the health and nutritional status of the Puerto Rican Community.

Sponsors,



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