

LA VOZ DEL PASEO BORICUA



@PRCC.Chicago



lavoz@prcc-chgo.org



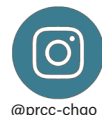
@prccchgoOrgYT



@jacprcc



773-394-4935



@prcc-chgo



Flickr

lavozdelpaseoboricua.org

PUERTO RICO TOWN SOON TO BECOME A REALITY



PG.3, 7

IL SENATE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTS **SEN. PACIONE-ZAYAS'** 1ST BILL TO CREATE CULTURAL DISTRICT



PG.17

CLEMENTE'S PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES RACIST GRADING POLICY

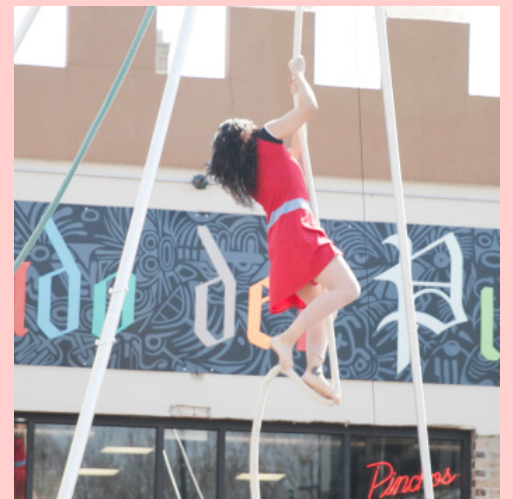


PG.6

REP. NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ **AND REP. ALEXANDRIA** **OCASIO-CORTEZ: PUERTO** **RICO SELF DETERMINATION** **BILL PROFILED**

"JOLGORIO DE SALSA Y MÁS..."

PAGINAS 10-11





ABOUT LA VOZ:

The most recent manifestation of Puerto Rican journalism in Chicago, La Voz del Paseo Boricua proudly continues in the legacy of our community's previous newspapers. Founded in 2004, La Voz del Paseo Boricua, or simply 'La Voz' as it is affectionately called by our readers, is a grassroots bilingual periodical published by the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center. We report on stories relevant to our community on a bimonthly basis, disseminating news about local events, programs, resources, and developments. As an alternative source of media, we seek to acknowledge the achievements of the Puerto Rican community at large and to advocate for the preservation of the heart of our barrio in Humboldt Park - our "pedacito de patria" in Chicago.

SOBRE LA VOZ:

La más reciente manifestación del periodismo puertorriqueño en Chicago, La Voz del Paseo Boricua continúa orgullosamente el legado de nuestros primeros periódicos. Fundado en 2004, La Voz del Paseo Boricua, o 'La Voz' según se le conoce cariñosamente por nuestros lectores, es un periódico de pueblo, publicado de manera bilingüe por El Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño Juan Antonio Corretjer. Bimensualmente, divulga historias relevantes de nuestra comunidad, diseminando noticias sobre acontecimientos, programas, recursos, y progresos locales. Como fuente alternativa de medios, intentamos reconocer los logros de la comunidad puertorriqueña al igual que abogar por la preservación del corazón de nuestro barrio Humboldt Park - nuestro "pedacito de patria" en Chicago.

MEET OUR PRODUCTION TEAM

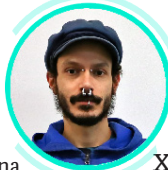


Roberto Sanabria
EDITOR IN CHIEF
robertos@prcc-chgo.org



Luis Alejandro Molina
SENIOR ADVISOR
alejandrom@prcc-chgo.org

Xiomara Rodríguez
DIRECTOR,
DIGITAL MEDIA
xiomara.rodriguez
@prcc-chgo.org



Xavier Claudio
PHOTOGRAPHER
xavierc@prcc-chgo.org



COMMUNITY AS A CAMPUS UPDATES

PRCC CHICAGO CONNECTED TEAM MAKES 7,000 CALLS: CONNECTS HUMBOLDT PARK FAMILIES TO THE INTERNET

By Marvin Gracia

The team of three PRCC Internet Ambassadors have made 7,000 calls to connect families to the Internet and their children to remote learning. Since August of 2020 Regisa Rosario, Mónica Lozada, and José Pagán used their google phones to call thousands of families and provide them with a special code that ensures free Internet service through Comcast and RCN while their children are CPS students. The initiative is

called Chicago Connected and it is funded through CPS and the Children's First Fund. The 7,000 calls are documented on a shared tracker, and weekly reports are submitted to the Chicago Connected Staff.

The PRCC team will now focus on working with schools in the Humboldt Park area to assist families yet to be connected, and troubleshoot problems that have kept students from attending classes regularly. The team will also refer



families to Mental Health Services, COVID vaccinations, and assistance with food, housing and utility bills. The team will continue this work until June 30, 2021.

WGN FEATURES: DR. PEDRO ALBIZU CAMPOS HIGH SCHOOL

By Marvin García

In the midst of a pandemic, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos H.S. staff has found a way to keep 94% of their 200 students engaged in school. Through the efforts of teachers and a team of mentors using several social media platforms, students remain engaged in their classes while taking on work to support their families. The motivator and engineer behind this effort is Principal Dr. Melissa Lewis. Lewis said, "It is the healing center approach, and meeting the students where they are at that is making a difference." The broadcast can be viewed on the WGN website entitled "Humboldt Park school helping students who are on verge of dropping out".



CARE ROOM AT WEST PARK ACADEMY OPENS

The student council of West Park Academy of Fine Arts and Technology has launched a care room called the Wolf Den. It's run by students and provides basic school supplies and personal hygiene items to students at the school. The student council took on this effort in response to the impact the COVID pandemic has had on the resources of fellow students. Help the students of West Park with a donation. Contact Marvin García at marving@prcc-chgo.org to donate.



IL SENATE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTS **SEN. PACIONE-ZAYAS'** FIRST BILL TO CREATE CULTURAL DISTRICT: A GREAT LEAP FORWARD FOR CREATION OF PUERTO RICO TOWN



By La Voz Staff

The Illinois Senate passed a plan by State Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas (D-Chicago) to allow for the designation of

cultural districts in Illinois, something she said would help to affirm the identity of communities in Illinois and preserve their distinct legacies.

"We want our communities to proudly reflect the identity, contributions and history of the people who have helped build them," Pacione-Zayas said Friday after the measure passed the Senate. "This gives them a chance to pursue community-driven economic opportunity initiatives that ensure our neighborhoods preserve their unique cultures and continue to build legacies."

An initiative of the Puerto Rican Agenda, the legislation would allow the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to establish the

necessary criteria and guidelines for designating such cultural districts.

"We want to provide communities the opportunity to affirm their cultures as a means to ignite economic recovery post-pandemic," Pacione-Zayas. "I'm thrilled the Senate has affirmed the importance of preserving community identity, and I urge the House to swiftly pass this legislation."

Senate Bill 1833 passed the Senate unanimously Friday. It awaits consideration before the Illinois House.

CDC RECOGNIZES **NATHALIE TIRADO'S** WORK TRANSLATES CRITICAL INTERVENTION TOOL INTO SPANISH

By La Voz Staff

The HIV Care Continuum involves several steps essential toward achieving viral suppression. Specifically it includes, diagnosis, linkage to care, receiving medical care for HIV infection, and achieving viral suppression. These developments have transformed the nation's approach to HIV prevention, but we have a long way to go still. By ensuring everyone is aware of HIV, and those with HIV aware of their infections, Latinx, African American, and other minorities, have yet to access culturally competent information. When information on treatment options, viral suppression, and high-impact HIV prevention strategy is available across the board in Spanish and English - then we can sharply reduce new infections in the United States.

With respect to the Transgender community, a community of wellness approach that understands gender dysphoria and risk for HIV are related genuinely creates a space for successful strategies.

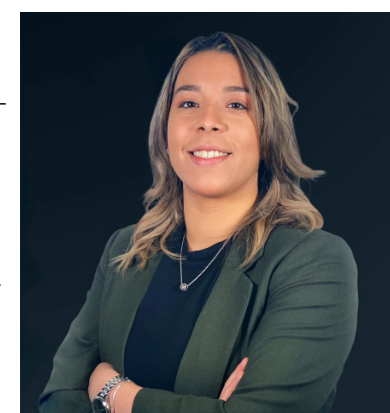
Evidence-based interventions such as TWIST must also include a culturally defined qualitative assessment that addresses the unique factors that young transgender women of color experience. The Puerto Rican Cultural Center and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been working hand in hand developing culturally competent and inclusive high-impact interventions in Spanish. In 2018, PRCC Associate Director

Nathalie Tirado successfully translated a key and trans-inclusive tool used by the CDC into Spanish, "Personalized Cognitive Counseling, an evidence-based intervention to reduce HIV-risk". This pioneering work has helped PRCC staff deepen their understanding of critical issues that grip the trans community, such as gender dysphoria, and how a meaningful intervention strategy can reduce significant risk behaviors related to sex and substance abuse. Tirado fervently advocates for high-impact interventions to be inclusive of cultural factors such as language. Specifically, she has challenged the CDC to create materials in the Spanish language because her community in Humboldt Park as well as the Trans/Non-Binary community are not confined to the English language.

Soon after her essential translation was approved, Tirado became the first cis-gender woman to become certified for TWIST intervention by the CDC. Transgender Women Involved in Strategies for Transformation (TWIST) is an intervention for adult transgender women with HIV (TWH). TWIST seeks to reduce sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV transmission risk behaviors among TWH by fostering gender affirmation, self-pride, increased social support, increased HIV and STD knowledge, self-efficacy for relationship management, safer-sex practices, and stress reduction. In 2019, Tirado witnessed firsthand the necessity for

TWIST intervention in Spanish because several Spanish speaking participants could not follow nor fully participate in the training. Tirado began translating materials until the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in early 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic Stay at Home order, Tirado spent much of her time translating the high-impact intervention into Spanish and submitted it to the CDC.

The CDC Project Officer communicated to The PRCC, "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is delighted with the continued contribution of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) commitment to improving cultural competence and providing everyone equal access to quality HIV prevention and care by translating the TWIST intervention. By providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health and healthcare, PRCC has improved the quality of services provided to all individuals in Chicago and the nation which ultimately helps reduce health disparities and achieve health equity."



RENOWNED PUERTO RICAN PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL **DR. YARIMAR BONILLA** ACCEPTS DIRECTORSHIP OF EL CENTRO

By Yarimar Bonilla

I am pleased to announce that beginning July 1, 2021 I will be assuming the role of Acting Director of El Centro, the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College. I would like to thank everyone who rallied and organized during this moment of transition, who wrote and signed the petition to "Save Centro," and particularly the auto-convocado group that activated the #Community4Centro coordinating committee.

Your efforts were key to informing my decision to accept the interim directorship and your concerns guided my discussions with the administration about institutional commitment to the center moving forward. My hope is that the momentum and energy built over the past month can be sustained and that I will be able to count on your collective brain trust and tactical expertise as we chart a new chapter for Centro together.

I have agreed to serve as Acting Director for two years, during which time a national search will be organized. Although one would wish for the first woman to run the Centro to arrive in a different context, a hurried search in the midst of a pandemic, a budgeting crisis, and a hiring freeze at CUNY serves no one.

The many different Centro constituencies, including CUNY faculty, students, academic leaders, and community members, all deserve to be part of charting a new path forward. I will be convening town hall meetings to open conversations about new thematic directions and expect a national search that will bring faith and pride in our institution.

Most importantly, I will be working with the administration to fill vacant lines and restore resources and support that Centro has lost over the years. Depending on how much I am able to

achieve during that time—and if the pledges of support made by the administration materialize—I will then consider whether I would like to be a candidate in the national search. These are the terms that I requested because I think they are what will most benefit El Centro and our community.

The next two years, however, will not be a time of mere pause and reflection – the issues that our communities face are much too urgent for that. As we transition towards a new chapter, I will work to develop new programs, seek new funding, establish fellowships, issue calls for research proposals, and develop other initiatives with your input.

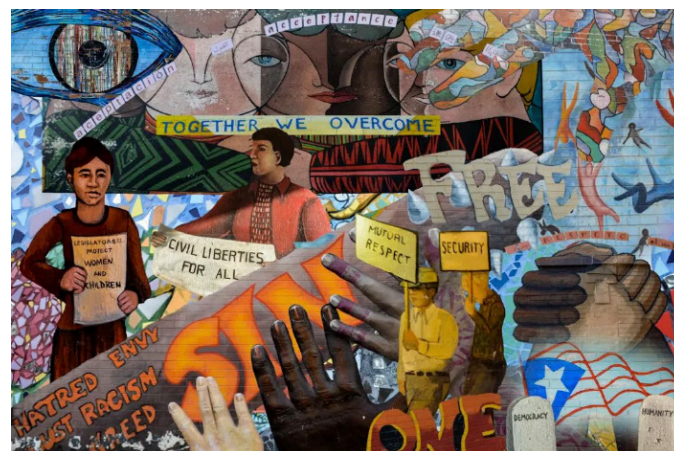
For those that don't know me well, allow me to offer a few words about my trajectory and the background I will bring to Centro:

Although I was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, my life has been shaped by what scholars call circular migration, or the Puerto Rican vaivén: I arrived in Topeka, Kansas as a kindergartener who didn't speak English, then later returned to Puerto Rico as a teenager with rusty Spanish. I graduated from public school and became politicized as an undergraduate at the University of Puerto Rico, but my most formative years were spent as a doctoral student in Chicago

living and working in the Puerto Rican community of Humboldt Park.

My years spent at the University of New Mexico and the University of Virginia gave me invaluable insights into the US as not just an empire, but also a settler colony and a racial state. The ties I built with African American and Native American scholars still shape the ways I think about Puerto Rico's place within the US.

I moved to New York City a decade ago, first to teach at Rutgers and then at Hunter College and the Graduate Center at CUNY where I have found



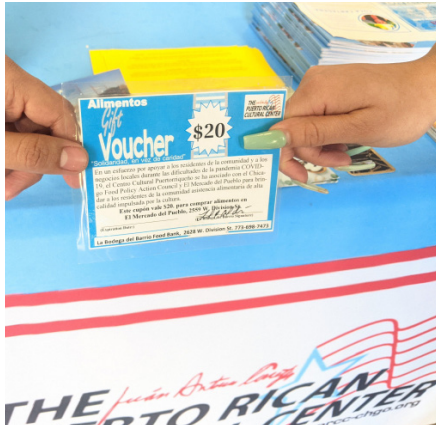
an intellectual cadre of students and colleagues that have helped me flourish as a scholar and public voice. I now consider New York—and particularly Brooklyn—as much of a home as San Juan.

My training as a Caribbeanist leads me to constantly place Puerto Rico within a larger comparative frame. My first book focuses on the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. My interest in the French Caribbean was driven by a desire to compare how our Caribbean neighbors—who have a similar relationship to France as what Puerto Rico might have to the United States under statehood—understand their place in the French nation and how and why they continue to search for greater sovereignty. Since then, I have continued to write about questions of sovereignty in the Caribbean, as well as racial and imperial politics in the United States broadly.

Six years ago, I began fieldwork for a new project focused on the politics of the statehood movement in Puerto Rico. However, since that time Puerto Rico has experienced repeated and compounding crises, disasters, earthquakes and pandemics and my interests have grown and evolved in relation to our historical conjuncture. Along with the usual forms of academic writing, during this critical time I have also foregrounded multiple forms of public scholarship, public advocacy, and collective projects that amplify voices from both sides of the “charco.” Among these projects I am most proud of the digital resource Puerto Rico Syllabus and the edited volume and accompanying

(Continue on page 5)

BODEGA DEL BARRIO FOOD BANK ADDRESSES FOOD JUSTICE IN THE COMMUNITY: "SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY"



by Leony Calderón

As the City settles into a new "normal", The Puerto Rican Cultural Center is restructuring its programs to better assist our community. La Bodega del Barrio Food Bank at 2628 W. Division St., a food bank for people affected by HIV, has expanded its services. Spearheaded by new leadership, La Bodega del Barrio Food Bank now offers food accessibility to the general population in need, health education classes for all, and physical activity for those who are 18 years and older.

La Bodega is collaborating closely with AMITA Health Saint Mary and Saint Elizabeth Medical Center and Borra College of Health Sciences at Dominican University to offer health education classes. La Bodega conducted several online nutritional classes in the fall of 2020 as well as an online and a limited in-person (with RSVP) winter nutritional series of classes, which followed strict state and city guidelines in accord with COVID-19 safety

measures. Now the online and in-person Spring Health Education Series is here for those who wish to take these classes – either online or in person with an RSVP. All classes are conducted in both English and Spanish. Additionally, Muévete, the physical activity program, has partnered with La Bodega to ensure a steady flow of food access, health education and physical activity designed to improve wellbeing. As we all know, proper nutrition and physical activity are essential elements in our battle against illness. Currently, the Muévete classes take place online Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays beginning at 6:30pm. Once the City opens to capacity, Muévete will resume at its regular locations, i.e., the Empowerment Center 2753 W. Division St., Humboldt Park Field House 1440 N. Sacramento Blvd., and Kosciuszko Park Field House 2732 N. Avers.

Aligning with The Puerto Rican Cultural Center's mission of self-actualization, self-reliance, and self-determination, La Bodega del Barrio Food Bank is unlike any other food bank in that we collaborate with local businesses and grocers to set up a food voucher system here in the community. This system provides participants a level of food security and dignity through a voucher-based access to food. The participants themselves go to the grocers of their choice and select only

the food they want for themselves. It is an affirmation of their autonomy. In addition to providing this form of empowerment to the community we are also supporting our local grocers and businesses to stay open during these trying times.

We are also looking to collaborate with local farmers to further extend our reach for food accessibility. If you are a farmer, please do not hesitate to reach out.

If you would like more information on our services, such as food assistance, health education classes and physical activity or if you know someone who could benefit from our services, please contact us and let us know.

If you would like to know more about La Bodega del Barrio Food Bank please call or email us at 773-342-0855, Labodega@prcc-ch-go.org. In accordance with state and city guidelines of COVID-19 safety measures, all visits are by appointment only. The Health Education Spring classes are on: May 20, and June 24, 2021. Online and in person, RSVP is required for in-person classes.



(Continued from page 4)

film, *Aftershocks of Disaster*.

As a cultural anthropologist, what I do best and enjoy most is to listen to others and ask questions. I am also a deeply interdisciplinary scholar – some might say anti-disciplinary. I've written op-eds with economists, published in art catalogs, created time-lapse maps, documentary films, podcasts, and worked with psychologists and public health scholars on thinking through the challenges our communities face in the wake of our multiple disasters. I hope that under my leadership Centro can be a space where all these different modes, methods, and communities can productively intersect.

I'm also particularly keen on creating intergenerational dialogue. We are very lucky that many of those who fought for the establishment of Puerto Rican Studies and the creation of the Centro are still in our community. These "elders" need to remain central to the space they willed into being. At the same time, Puerto Rican Studies as a whole is going through a "relevo generacional" with a new generation of scholars bringing new questions and urgency to the study of the Puerto Rican archipelago and diaspora in ways that center previously marginalized perspectives and methodologies. My hope is to serve as a bridge between these different generations and to bring them into generative dialogue.

I will not be officially operating as acting director until July 1, but I remain open to dialogue between now and then and am particularly keen on hearing from the Centro community (broadly speaking) about the thematic directions that they would like to see reflected in Centro programming and initiatives. You can write to me directly or join the community group #Community4 CENTRO community-4centro@gmail.com to stay informed of new developments.

I am here to listen to any concerns you have about this transition, but most of all I want to hear about your hopes for our new collective chapter.

REP. NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ AND REP. ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ: PUERTO RICO SELF DETERMINATION ACT PROFILED: FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE DECOLONIZATION OF PUERTO RICO

By Melissa Mark-Viverito

On March 18, 2021 Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio Cortez re-introduced the Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act of 2021, H.R. 2070, in the U.S. House of Representatives, and Senator Bob Menéndez introduced its companion bill S. 865 in the U.S. Senate. This bicameral and bipartisan legislation would empower Puerto Ricans with an inclusive and democratic process to determine their own political future and relationship with the United States. Under this proposed legislation, a status convention would be created and delegates would be elected to discuss options with federal officials, and therefore create an official, legitimate, and comprehensive bilateral conversation on status.

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, working alongside former Congressman Luis Gutiérrez and nationwide allies, organized a multifaceted campaign prior to the bill's reintroduction that has led to widespread support for the bill. The PRCC also worked diligently to persuade congressional representatives to sign on; at introduction H.R. 2070 had 79 co-sponsors and S. 865 had 8 co-sponsors.

Additional campaign efforts The PRCC

has engaged in include:

March 4 open letter to Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi with more than 100 progressive organizations across the country and Puerto Rico signing on in support of the island's right to a transparent and inclusive self-determination process. The PRCC worked with our coalition

Diaspora participated in this dynamic event. Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez and former Congressman Luis Gutiérrez addressed the attendees and Melissa Mark Viverito and Jessie Fuentes read messages of support from The PRCC. Immediately following the digital rally, The PRCC held a press conference to reinforce support of the congressional legislation and

to highlight the Illinois Senate's adoption of a resolution in support of H.R. 2070/S. 865, which are co-sponsored by State Senators Omar Aquino and Cristina Pacione-Zayas. At the local level, Alderman Roberto Maldonado has introduced a resolution in the Chicago City Council. We expect passage within the next couple of weeks;

H.R. 2070

was assigned to

the Natural Resources Committee chaired by Congressman Raúl Grijalva. The committee held its first hearing of the bill on April 14. A second hearing is projected, but no date has been set.

The PRCC continues to take the lead in building and strengthening our coalition. Log on to www.letsendcolonialismtogether.com and learn how you can continue to support this crucial work.



members and was able to secure signatures of 12 Illinois organizations in addition to many others across multiple states:

March 22, Puerto Rico's Abolition Day, our partners in Puerto Rico, including Power 4 Puerto Rico, organized a digital rally in support of self-determination for Puerto Rico and in support of H.R. 2070/S. 865. Hundreds of friends and allies on the island and across the

PUERTO RICO TOWN SOON TO BECOME A REALITY: IL HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ADOPT LEGISLATION

By La Voz Staff

During the past two months our community has witnessed two impressive victories in our efforts to maintain this area as a critical space that speaks to the Puerto Rican presence and persistence in this city. On March 25, 2021, Representative Delia Ramírez shepherded through the HB 2395 bill for the Puerto Rico Town Empowerment District out of the Museums, Arts, & Cultural Enhancements Committee and onto the House floor. On April 15, 2021, there was another achievement for Puerto Rico Town. SBI833, the State Designated Cultural District bill was voted out of the Senate Committee on Tourism and Hospitality and onto the Senate floor with a 9-0 vote. 26 years after the installation of the flags of steel and the creation of Paseo Boricua, we can now speak of an expansion of this cultural commercial corridor into a cultural empowerment district, which will encompass a two-mile long strip on Division St. stretching from Western to Kostner. Thanks to Senators Cristina Pacione-Zayas and Omar Aquino and Representative Delia Ramírez for their leadership and support! They all embody what it means to represent their communities.

Jessie Fuentes, Co-Chair of the Puerto Rican Agenda issued the following statement during the hearing:

SBI833 seeks to create State Designated Cultural Districts in communities that have a rich history to preserve culture and identity. This bill will ensure that we invest in communities that have been disinvested in and protect communities that are being gentrified.

Imagine being able to create a state of neighborhoods with main streets

that allow tourists to experience culture, history, and the arts. Tourists can travel one state and feel like they are traveling the world.

Immerse yourself totally in the Puerto Rican experience. Puerto Rico Town, popularly known as La Division, is a cultural hub in the city of Chicago. For the past 60 years we have built cultural and educational institutions.

In our commercial corridor we have ¡WEPA! Mercado de Pueblo, which recreates an economic engine for local artists and small business entrepreneurs. In Puerto Rico Town you can taste the best Puerto Rican food, smell the aroma of Puerto Rican coffee, listen to bomba y plena and all the genres of music played in our festivals and parade, you can see Puerto Rican art exhibits In the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, and touch the amazing Paseo Boricua Walk of Fame honoring Puerto Rican artists - Imagine being able to engage all of your senses in one commercial corridor.

There is a unique opportunity to be a state like none other, to intentionally and thoughtfully not just be welcoming of all cultures, but to preserve them with adequate resources. Imagine being able to award Designated Cultural District resources to the Polish, Black, Palestinian, Asian, Italian, Jewish, and many other communities. Imagine transforming our urban areas into becoming the world in the city. Imagine being able to have main streets all across Illinois! This is not just any other bill, this is THE bill to transform our state - thank you.

PROF. MORIS GARCÍA ABRE “JOLGORIO DE SALSA Y MÁS...” CON CONFERENCIAS: INFUSIÓN DE CANABIS EN LA COCINA PUERTORRIQUEÑA Y LA HISTORIA DEL RAP Y REGAETÓN EN PUERTO RICO

By La Voz Staff

Como prelude de nuestro Jolgorio de Salsa y Más, el Chef y Profesor Raúl Moris García nos invitó a una fascinante presentación de su trabajo reciente el 1 y 2 de abril. Durante su primera presentación sobre la infusión de cannabis con alimentos y bebidas puertorriqueños, examinó la importancia histórica del cannabis en las vidas y prácticas de nuestros antepasados. Recomendamos encarecidamente que la gente visite su sitio <https://marihuamedicinalpuertorico.weebly.com> para obtener más información. Al día siguiente, el profesor García habló sobre las raíces históricas del reguetón y el rap en Puerto Rico. Hizo su presentación a través de actuaciones de palabra hablada. Su libro titulado “El Rap vs. La 357” está disponible en la sección Borincanías de ¡WEPA! Mercado del Pueblo. En referencia a su viaje, el profesor Raúl Moris García hizo las siguientes observaciones:

El Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño de Chicago me ha honrado con ser parte de las presentaciones de apertura en el Mercado del Pueblo. Un proyecto visionario para emprender la libertad económica para lxs pequenxs empresarios que habitan la propuesta de desarrollo. Lo más importante es que El PRCC ha renovado mi esperanza y admiración, con los ejemplos vivos de compromi-

so, servicio, y resiliencia en la comunidad puertorriqueña de Chicago y específicamente la comunidad de Humboldt.

Durante mis presentaciones, presencié una niña que en su majestuosa manifestación aportó lo inculcado en su corazón, por una familia y comunidad, un orgullo patrio y autóctono. Presenté el tesón del Dr José López Rivera y su maravilloso equipo impresionante de trabajo. Tengo que incluir las estupendas atenciones del Dr. López Rivera y de Xiomara para con mi familia (literal). No estaría exagerando en decir que nuestro sentir era de un Jíbaro de la isla que regresa a su casa y es recibido como el hijo pródigo de Richie Ray y Bobby Cruz, gracias de mi parte y toda mi familia. Fuimos testigos de múltiples proyectos realizados y funcionales, que crean una infraestructura exitosa de resistencia, afirmación boricua, orgullo, respeto y futuro. Nos encantó aprender, compartir, reafirmar y disfrutar, gracias, gracias, gracias.



LISA ISADORA CRUZ TRANS CHICAGO EMPOWERMENT CENTER CELEBRATES TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY



by Nathalie Tirado

On March 31, 2021, the Trans Chicago Empowerment Center hosted a powerful event for the International Transgender Day of Visibility. Lisa Isadora Cruz, a Latinx trans woman and coordinator for the Center, emceed the event. During her introduction, Cruz engaged the attendees by asking, “Why is Transgender Day of Visibility important?” Some declared that there needs to be more awareness as well as assistance for transgender people because they are so often “othered”. Lisa, in turn, answered her own question saying, “It was very, very difficult to become who I am today. The teasers, hard times, and disappointments ... I made it. And I’m here.” Lisa also mentioned that we need to use our voices so that we may be heard and seen, especially to the government who disproportionately overlooks the transgender community.

Following the heart-warming and thought-provoking introduction by Lisa Cruz, Saanti Martin, a staff member of Trans Chicago, shared her poem entitled, “My Trans Is”. “My trans needs you, my trans needs us, my trans needs thus”, was part of this riveting poem, which calls everyone to action against the immense injustices continually suffered by the trans community.

The Trans Chicago Empowerment Center awarded special recognitions to transgender leaders

in the community. Vincent Grey, a new case manager for Trans Chicago, received the “Trailblazer Award.” In his speech, he said, “These are the moments that we need to create for our trans community. Moments of love and care; not judgement, fear of legislation that questions the worth of a person for merely existing as themselves.” The next recognition went to Nissa Condes who was given the Legacy Award. Condes is a celebrated advocate for the Latina Trans Community in the Windy City. Speaking in Spanish, she shared with the attendees, “I have suffered a lot of persecution, just like many of my sisters. I have been victimized to the brink of death - as have many who lost their lives, but I never lost faith.” Mónica Fernández followed Nissa, and received the Advocacy Award. Fernández is the owner of DRAMA Beauty, a salon in Cicero. She promotes trans women by hiring them to work in her salon and by making space for them to grow. Fernández said, “I adore my trans brothers and sisters. I’m here to let you know that it’s okay to be different. Don’t stop and don’t change for nobody.” Following these amazing women, in spirit, was Eve Stiles who was unable to join the event, but sent her message that as an undocumented trans woman of color, she is “the voice for all her communities.” Stiles was recognized with the Resiliency Award.

After the special recognitions were awarded, Maya Lozano introduced a new documentary by Nathalie González-Pérez, entitled TRANScending La Division. Maya read, “No legislation will erase trans existence. Nathalie captures narratives of trans people who live in Humboldt Park in the 80s, 90s, 2000s, and now.” The documentary follows the

narratives of five transgender people and some of their family members who live in the Humboldt Park community. The documentary will be released this summer. Daniel Méndez, an associate director for The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, spoke after the trailer and stated, “At the end of the day, we’re all humans together. We need to be visible to who we are as individuals.”

Closing the event, Executive Director Dr. José E. López, spoke of the historical significance of International Trans Day of Visibility. Addressing the attendees as well as the Spanish language press, López asserted in Spanish, “This is historic because in the heart of our neighborhood we are celebrating the visibility of a community that has been entirely marginalized. And now it is time that they cease to be people who are completely silenced, not seen nor heard, and that we start paying attention to them.” After the arousing and hopeful words of all



who participated, The Puerto Rican Cultural Center shared delicious Puerto Rican food from Nellie’s with the guests who remained at the conclusion of the event - fully enjoying each other’s company through music, food, and stories.

PRCC WOMXN LEADERS

RECOGNIZE STRONG COMMUNITY VOICES ON I.W.D.

By *Xiomara Rodriguez*

On March 8, 2021, the Womxn's Committee of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center celebrated International Women's Day. This year's theme was "Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 World". Due to the pandemic, the event was smaller than usual and required masks, but the message of empowering, uplifting, and supporting women was stronger than ever. The event was held at iWEPA! Mercado del Pueblo and highlighted many of the incredible women business owners who are part of the business incubator project. It also featured powerful speeches from community women such as the keynote speaker Jessie Fuentes, and the awardees, Maggie Martínez, Ivelisse Díaz, Brenda Torres, Milady Velázquez, Cristina Pacione Zayas, Maya Lozano, Gabrielle Sánchez, and Reyna Ortiz.

Throughout the celebration, many women spoke of the importance of celebrating the women in our lives every day, not just on International Women's Day. The official theme of International Women's Day this year may have been about achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world, which references the highly disproportionate number of women forced to leave the workforce as a consequence of COVID-19. However, women at the celebration called for more than an equal future; they demanded a just future because the systemic injustices that women have endured for centuries have only increased and are exposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was made clear that this was one of the most deadly years for trans women, particularly Black and Brown trans women, and that domestic violence incidents against women increased during the lockdown. At the same time, this past year has shown us how powerful we are when we come together. Women continue to

lead the fight for social justice, and against police brutality, and women have continued to organize their communities in response to the pandemic with a variety of mutual aid efforts to meet people's needs. Leony Calderón from The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, in particular, has worked tirelessly to address food insecurity in our community.

This International Women's Day event was filled with celebration and inspiration. It was also a call to action to continue working towards a just future for women, and to support the women in your lives now. This was emphasized when we discussed



the woman whom the event was dedicated to; our beloved artist Cuca. Unfortunately, this year brought Cuca serious medical difficulties, but it was moving to see the community rally around her with various fundraising efforts to offset her medical costs and support her healing process. Everyone left with a clear understanding that it will take work from all of us, every single day; like supporting Cuca's recovery, creating safety for trans women, and giving women the time and support to follow their dreams if we want to achieve a just future for women. have been about achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world, which references the disparate

proportion of women who were forced to leave the workforce as a consequence of COVID-19. However, women at the celebration called for more than an equal future, but rather a just future, because the systemic injustices that women have had to endure for centuries have only been augmented and exposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was pointed out that this was one of the most deadly years for trans women, particularly Black and Brown trans women, and that domestic violence incidents against women increased during the lockdown. At the same time, this past year has shown us how powerful we are when we come together. Women continued to lead the fight for social justice, and against police brutality, and women have continued to organize their communities in response to the pandemic with a variety of mutual aid efforts to meet people's needs. Leony Calderón from The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, in particular, has worked tirelessly to address food insecurity in our community. This International Women's Day event was filled with celebration and inspiration. It was also a call to action to continue working towards a just future for women, and to support the women in your lives now. This was

stressed when we talked about the woman whom the event was dedicated to; our beloved artist Cuca. Unfortunately, this year brought Cuca some serious medical difficulties, and it was moving to see the community rally around her with fundraising efforts to support her medical costs and healing process like "cucastrong.com". Everyone left with a clear understanding that it will take work from all of us every single day; like supporting Cuca's recovery, creating safety for trans women, and giving women the time and support to follow their dreams if we want to achieve a just future for women.

Centerfold

Centerfold

PRTC Mourns The Physical Loss of the Following Beloved Members of our Community:

By La Voz Staff

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, its board of directors, and staff join the Amador family as they mourn the physical loss of Luz Amador. Luz is the mother of Mildred Amador, an amazing filmmaker who produced the documentary film *Flags of Steel* and a long-time educator at Roberto Clemente High School. We know that Mildred's deep love for her Puerto Ricanness and for our Puerto Rican community is deeply informed by her loving Mother. Luz María Amador, née Adorno, age 80, passed away peacefully on March 14, 2021. Luz was the beloved wife of Felipe for 57 wonderful years; loving mother of Evelyn and Mildred Amador; dearest daughter of the late Eladia and Bautista Adorno; cherished grandmother of Axel and Alixa Massol-Amador, Javier (Aanika) Camargo; dear sister of Marta R. (Rudy) Pichardo, Juan Bautista (Anita) Adorno, Nectar Josephine (the late Manuel) Claros and the late Carlos Ceferino, Carmen Delia Bittarelli, and William Narciso Adorno; fond aunt of many.

Luz Amador



By Milday Velázquez

Iván Velázquez was an extraordinary man. He was born Oct 23, 1946 in Peñuelas, Puerto Rico. Iván was a long-time resident of Humboldt Park, and established his business on Paseo Boricua in 1980. He was married to Noelia Velázquez for 45 years. He was blessed with four daughters, one son, two grandsons, and one granddaughter. Iván was the second oldest of nine children -- five sisters and four brothers. He was a self-taught cabinet maker and highly skilled craftsman in his own right. He was sought after for his quality kitchen cabinets and famous for his domino tables. His craft and skills were passed down to his son, brothers, nephews, and several others who owe their cabinet making careers to him. Iván Velázquez was a true mentor.

Since his early 20s, Iván was a pastoral figurehead and role model in the extended Velázquez family. Everyone turned to him for his wisdom, leadership, and guidance in all matters secular and non-secular. Doing what was right before God and man, Iván made time to visit the sick in hospitals and their homes. Without hesitation and a smile on his face, he sought out and helped people in need. He went on many missionary trips that took him to Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and Cuba. In 1996 he was anointed as Associate Pastor of Iglesias Misión del Valle. For 15 years he taught Spanish grammar at Voz Del Altísimo Bible Institute. He loved spending his time in prayer and studying the Word of God.

Iván was humble, charismatic, and jovial. His jokes and humor dominated social events and filled everyone's hearts with joy and love. Iván was a gift to his family and friends. Iván Velázquez was an exceptional man with a heart full of love for everyone. He will be remembered for his smile, kindness, generosity, respect, and faithfulness to God and others. He will be dearly missed.

Iván Velázquez



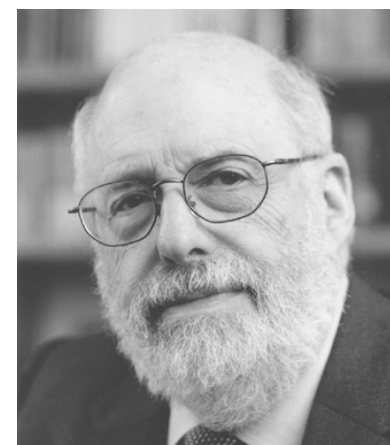
By La Voz Staff

Rabbi Robert Marx was one of the towering figures of Chicago's struggle for social justice. He was actively engaged in many causes in Chicago for many decades dating to the mid 60's when he witnessed the attacks on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and the civil rights marchers in Gage Park.

He wrote the following about that incident: "What I saw in Gage Park seared my soul, I was afraid and I am afraid now. I saw how the concentration camp could have occurred, and how men's hatred could lead them to kill. I saw Catholic priests reviled and nuns spat upon. I found myself -- a rabbi -- standing guard like a policeman, over a pile of rocks, for fear that grown men and mothers dragging little children around with them would seize those rocks and throw them at the demonstrators. I saw teenage boys and girls ready to kill. I should have been with the marchers.

Rabbi Marx was also a major defender of Chicago's Puerto Rican community. At every juncture of attacks by the Chicago police, the FBI, the grand juries, and the U.S. Attorney, Rabbi Marx was there as a prophetic witness to the injustices and to take action in denouncing them. Rabbi Marx exemplified the best, and most honorable, historic tradition of Jewish humanism. His physical loss will surely be one less voice for prophetic justice.

Rabbi Robert Marx



Koko Nia Labeija

By Dr. Melissa Lewis

As a school community, we strive to center the lived experiences of our youth, uplifting their safety, equality, and freedom in our daily work. While we hope this is the actual reality of how we move in our spaces with youth, we have failed Koko Nia Labeija. We did not do enough to protect her wellness. We did not do enough to engage her in her healing. We did not do enough to nurture a safe space for her.

We did not have enough resources, opportunities, or the sustainable system of support to honor Koko's truth. A young, Black transgender woman who was in critical need of an affirming space to engage in healing, but we failed her. We need to lean into intentionality around our response to trauma in and around our communities. We need to listen and honor our youth voices, especially our LGBTQIA youth.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that we failed Koko because we exist in a world that does not value Black trans lives. No one can truly be free until our Black trans sisters are. We lost Koko because she lived in a world that thought her life was disposable. We can no longer do right by Koko, but we can commit to a more just world for our young trans women of color.

In her honor, we make these commitments:

Community Commitments

Love our youth, their faults, their possibilities, their joy, and their voices

Protect our youth by reinforcing our practices of honoring their true identities

Destroy the systemic white supremacy, misogyny, ableism, classism, homophobia, and transphobia



Build and maintain our mentoring relationships with our youth, even after they have graduated from our high school

Koko Nia Labeija's memory was honored with a virtual vigil on Friday, April 9th at the Trans Empowerment Center of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center in partnership with Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School followed by a walk to Humboldt Park. Koko was known for creating community no matter where she was. Nearly 100 folks from Koko's childhood and adulthood joined virtually to celebrate Koko's life – we shared stories, meaningful reflections, and intentions to keep her memory alive. Friends and family walked to Koko's favorite spot at Humboldt Park pond where we danced and cried and felt her presence in the sunshine.

Tryfan Morys Eibhlyn X Lwyd

By Margaret and Melinda Power

Tryfan, best known to us as Arawn, died peacefully in their sleep on March 24, 2021, in Louisville, Kentucky. Tryfan was from a small town in Kentucky and grew up in a racist and homophobic environment. After completing college, they moved to California in the early 1970s. Arawn joined the burgeoning gay liberation movement and soon afterwards became a member of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. They helped to form ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) San Francisco to confront the AIDS crisis, lack of health care, and homophobia.

In the early 1980s, Tryfan moved to Chicago to work with ACT-UP, Prairie Fire and to support the movement to free Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican political prisoners. In 1987, Tryfan tested positive for AIDS and moved back to San Francisco, which had the most advanced support system for people living with AIDS.

They returned to Kentucky to take care of their dying mother in the mid-1990s and stayed there after she died. Tryfan continued their political activism by participating in AIDS related groups and anti-racist activities. Despite

their physical challenges and being confined to a wheelchair, they continued to fight White supremacy, U.S. imperialism, homophobia, and transphobia daily. In the last year of their life, Arawn realized that they identified as a non-binary person, changed their name to Tryfan, and deepened their love for Wales, which led to their immersion into the Welsh language, culture, and history.



Palmira Santiago Fraticelli García

By Dora García

My mother, Palmira Santiago Fraticelli García, was born in Yauco, Puerto Rico on March 12, 1920, with a "government" birthday of May 10, 1920, which is when she was registered. She was a happy child and always shared loving stories with us of her mother, family members, and friends during those formative years. When she told those stories, she was oblivious to the difficult times, to the poverty and disease that consumed her surroundings.

At an early age, she lost all her immediate family--her mother, brothers and sisters--to the horrific tuberculosis epidemic that ravaged Puerto Rico during the 1930s and 40s. She may not have known it, but that is when she discovered the ability of the human spirit to withstand tragedy with unbreakable strength.

She also lost a baby son in 1941 (which she rarely wanted to speak of), her first husband Ruben Fraticelli Amil died of cancer in 1945, her son Ruben, murdered by the Chicago police in 1976, her son Porfirio died in 1986 at the age of 42 and my father Efrain, her second husband, passed away in 1993 at the age of 66. In spite of all her heartache and loss, she never faltered, she always endured. She was a true survivor who continued to move forward despite the pain.

At the age of 19, my mother took on the responsibility of raising my sister Lilliana, right from birth, as her sister, Adonia, was not able to care for her. At age 25, she became a widow with five young children to raise by herself. During those struggling years, she began sewing by hand for the needlework industry, which at the time really took advantage and exploited the poor and those in need in Puerto Rico.

To put this in perspective, the needlework industry consisted principally of hand sewing operations performed by women in their homes on material supplied by manufacturers and jobbers from the mainland, USA. She hand-sewed gloves, handkerchiefs, and Playtex bras. Home needlework was an industry "without any foundation except misery. It could exist only on desperation wages." My mother made 12 cents a day. No one could make a living at it; but a woman whose husband was sick and then passed away and whose children needed to be

fed will go to great lengths for the price of a few pounds of rice.

In 1948, she met my father who pursued her relentlessly. They married in 1950, the year I was born and migrated to Chicago in 1953. All of this took great courage, as she could not bring all her children at once, and had to send for them gradually once they had saved enough money for airfare. Mom immediately got a job. She got paid 68 cents an hour. She had a strong work ethic. To her, work = joy = accomplishments = appreciation = gratitude. Later she got a job that had a union. She was proud to be a blue collar, union member factory worker and rarely missed a day of work. She retired as a drill press operator from Bally Manufacturing in 1982.

My mother had a striking beauty that showed in the way she carried herself-- gracefully, proudly, and with such sassiness (as her granddaughters would say). She had amazing grace. She had a delightful soul, an infectious laugh, and a vibrant personality. I have never known a more positive person. She had a way of focusing on someone with total attention. It was a gift of herself that she gave to others. She reveled in our accomplishments, hurt with our sorrows, and felt sheer joy and delight in spending time with us.

Vuelvo y repito--¡Mi madre era impresionante! She didn't make a big deal out of things; she just did all the big things that needed to be done. For example, she worked overtime for a year to pay for my wedding, bought cribs for all her first-born grandchildren, wedding dresses for her granddaughters, took care of my niece Nina for her first six months of life; my niece Thelma was born in our home, and my nephew Johnny was almost born in her hands (thankfully the ambulance arrived). She devoted herself to her grandchildren, Cookie and Ruben, when they were little to help my brother, Porfy. She helped raise my son Kevin "con estas manos" as she would say, taught him how to crawl and even how to whistle! She helped him become the person he is today.

Although she only went to the 5th grade, she had a passion for books and reading and she loved to

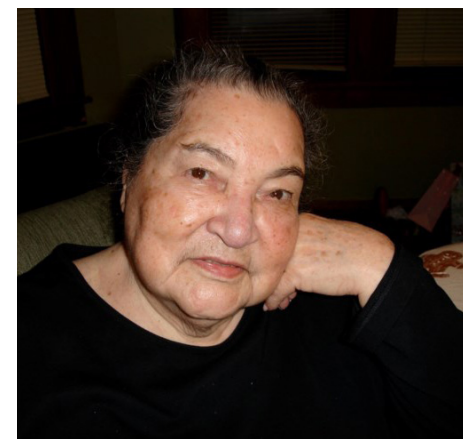
repeatedly tell me that the children who studied in her hometown would ask her to read their assignments and then

interpret them. She delighted in this as it gave her access to books.

During my own childhood, I always remember her with a book in hand and every month we went to the records/books/magazines store on Division and Rockwell to buy her monthly Vanidades magazine and her romantic novelas by Corrin Tellado and similar authors.

But it wasn't until I was 25 that I realized how well read my mother was. One day, I invited her to go see the movie *Gone with the Wind*. And she said, "Yes, I would love to see *Lo Que El Viento Se LLevó*." My reaction was, "What? How do you know the name in Spanish?" to which she replied, "because I read the book" (the translated version of the novel by Margaret Mitchell). She also told me that she had read *The Three Musketeers*, but Alexandre Dumas, and other great classics. I had newfound admiration for her! Later, when she moved in with me after my father's death, I made weekly trips to the public library for her and along with Marta (my sister-in law) and Cookie (her granddaughter), we gave her books in Spanish for her birthday, Mother's Day, Christmas, and for no-occasions in-between. She read Gabriel García Márquez, Isabel Allende, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes, among others, and even American authors like Nicolas Sparks, John Grisham, and Stephen King. She also had me subscribe to *Vanidades*, *Cosmopolitan* and *People en Español*.

Along with her ardor and passion for reading, she loved to go to the movies (to the Spanish theaters, like *El Tampico*, *Teatro San Juan*), and watch novelas. She loved certain famous people like



(Continue on page 15)

EL ESTATUS DE PUERTO RICO: NUEVOS CAMINOS PARA VIEJOS CONFLICTOS

By Aníbal Acevedo Vilá

Ya está presentado el proyecto de status liderado por las congresistas Nydia Velázquez, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, y el senador Bob Menéndez. Su presentación y contenido ameritan análisis y apoyo decidido.

Arranca con el apoyo de 75 congresistas y ocho senadores; 20 congresistas más y el doble de los senadores que tienen el proyecto de estadidad impulsado por el PNP. Además, incluye un senador republicano, mientras que la versión senatorial de los estadistas, ninguno. Es el proyecto que inicia su discusión con el apoyo más amplio, comparado con todos los que se han presentado en este siglo. Y esto a pesar de la oposición férrea del gobernador y de la comisionada residente.

Pero lo más significativo es que este proyecto, contrario a los antecedentes históricos, no nace de una petición de ningún partido político de Puerto Rico. Este no es el proyecto del PPD, del PIP, y mucho menos del MVC, ni PD. Ésta es la primera vez que se presenta con fuerza una medida de status que es iniciativa de los que tienen que hablar con claridad: los congresistas.

Este proyecto no nos impone nada y no nos predefine el camino a seguir. Por eso no tiene definiciones de status y ni siquiera menciona las palabras estadidad, independencia, Estado Libre Asociado, o libre asociación. Lo que la medida hace es reconocer el derecho que tiene Puerto Rico a convocar una Asamblea de Status (lo que comúnmente llamamos una constituyente). ¿Cuándo y cómo se convoca? Eso lo deja en manos de la legislatura de Puerto Rico. En esa Asamblea de Status habrá delegados de todas las tendencias ideológicas del país.

Si la convocamos, entonces la ley activaría una

comisión negociadora federal, de Cámara y Senado, con republicanos y demócratas, con la comisionada residente y con participación de los departamentos federales de Justicia y del Interior. La función de esa comisión, dialogar y negociar con los miembros de la Asamblea de Status y contestarnos las preguntas que nunca nos han contestado sobre el idioma y la cultura bajo la estadidad; las consecuencias contributivas de la estadidad, de un ELA no territorial o la libre asociación; la ciudadanía americana bajo la libre asociación y la independencia; etc.

Finalmente, y como resultado de ese diálogo, los delegados redactarán propuestas de status y planes de transición, que irían a votación del pueblo. Sería la primera vez que el pueblo pueda votar basado en el resultado de ese diálogo y negociación con el Congreso. El único requisito sustantivo es que esas opciones de status tienen que estar fuera de la cláusula territorial. Y si este proceso se concluye durante el término del Congreso bajo el cual la ley fue aprobada, ese

Congreso tiene que aprobar ("shall approve") la opción apoyada mayoritariamente por el pueblo.

Esto amerita una reflexión para mi partido. La medida reconoce el paso histórico de la creación del ELA en 1952 y la resolución de la ONU del 1953. En su parte sustantiva, no menciona ninguna versión futura del ELA, porque el proyecto no define alternativas. Eso le toca a la Asamblea de Status. El requisito de que las alternativas estén fuera de la cláusula territorial ha sido la aspiración histórica del PPD. Estar "fuera del alcance de los poderes plenarios" es estar fuera de la cláusula territorial. Ya el Congreso interpretó que si estás dentro de esa cláusula, estás bajo los poderes plenarios. Y la junta de Promesa es ejemplo vivo de eso.

Llegó el momento de actuar por nuevos caminos para atender viejos conflictos.



(Continued from page 14)

Thalia, Lucero, Gloria Trevi, Princess Diana, Princess Carolyn, John Kennedy Jr., Elizabeth Taylor, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Elvis Presely and followed their life stories with the devotion of a true fan.

Mom loved nothing more than to be surrounded by her family-children

, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and friends. Sunday afternoon family dinners were a must and she always cooked more than she needed to-just in case anyone unexpectedly stopped by. Everyone was always welcomed.

One thing all selfless people have in common is the great capacity to love others and express it. My mother was filled with the Power of Love, and she expressed it through hugs, affection, encouragement, belief, and most importantly through her actions.

Our family referred to her as our Queen, for she loved us all so deeply, and we felt it. We felt it. (The last time I counted there are at least 108 of us). She gave individual attention to each one of her grandchildren, making them feel they were her favorite. She had many friends of all ages -- young and old. Best friends like Carmín, Patria, Angie, and Santa, whom she went to the movies with and to Felipe Rodríguez concerts when he came to Chicago. All my friends were like her own--Pat, Gloria, Irene, José. She had elderly, disabled, and male friends. (Radame, his mother, Don Paco, her neighbors in Puerto Rico). After she retired, she would always send cards to her friends and put a ten or twenty-dollar bill in them.

My mother was my everything. When I achieved anything, she would tell the whole world. When I was in grammar school, I always turned in my report card late because she first had to take it to the factory to show her co-workers. She was immensely proud. If I had to conjure up one life lesson that she would want me to carry for the rest of my life, it is this: always trust yourself. She believed in me, and she believed that I always would do what was best.

Her life experiences gave her wisdom, which she shared with the many who confided in her (she was discrete and inspired trust). She was always looking through the eyes of love—that is how she always saw me and that is always how she saw you.

DR. CARMEN FEBO SAN MIGUEL RETIRES AS HEAD OF “TALLER PUERTORRIQUEÑO”: LED PENNSYLVANIA'S LARGEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE PUERTO RICAN/LATINX CULTURAL INSTITUTION

By La Voz Staff

Taller Puertorriqueño (Taller) announced that Dr. Carmen Febo San Miguel will retire as Executive Director after 22 years in this role. Her retirement will become effective November 1, 2021, allowing appropriate time for Taller to complete a search and ensure a seamless leadership transition for the organization.

Dr. Febo's service to Taller is remarkable not simply because of its length but its vision in creating Pennsylvania's largest Puerto Rican and Latino arts organization and one of the most respected in the Northeast Region. While Dr. Febo has served as Executive Director of Taller since 1999, she was deeply engaged with Taller prior, as the Chair of its Board of Directors for 14 years. Under her wise stewardship across nearly four decades, Taller has grown from a small organization housed in one Philadelphia row home to a \$1 million operation, now headquartered in the \$11 million, state-of-the-art El Corazón Cultural Center. Located in the heart of Philadelphia's Latino community, this stunning facility serves as a pennant of culture, resilience, place, and creativity.

Dr. Febo has also led Taller's programmatic agenda in the expansion of Art Residencies into the School District of Philadelphia and other charter schools through the Visítenos (Visit Us) program. She further developed new collaborations to exhibit Taller's art collection off-site, led the coordination of the ever-expanding Feria del Barrio, and has been called to collaborate and/or produce programming for The Kimmel Center's International Festival for the Arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the African American Museum in Philadelphia, and the Barnes Foundation, among others.

“It is difficult to imagine Taller without the visionary presence of Carmen Febo San

Miguel on an everyday basis,” said Ellie DiLapi, Chair of Taller's Board. “Her impact on Taller, on the Puerto Rican and Latinx community in Philadelphia, and on the region's arts and culture scene is immeasurable. While known for her ‘soft-spoken’ leadership style, Carmen's consistent message of cultural empowerment through the arts has galvanized our growing staff and passionate volunteers. What she has created at Taller has helped to transform the Puerto Rican and Latinx community in Philadelphia and for that, we are forever indebted to her. We wish her well as she moves into this well-deserved next chapter of her life.” Since its founding in 1974, Taller has faced a host of financial and institutional challenges like those faced by many non-profit arts organizations. Ever-changing foundation and funding priorities as well as government policies have spurred organizations to be innovative, resilient, and adaptive to an ever-changing economic landscape, particularly during times of economic contraction. Taller has been well-positioned to navigate these challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the persistent advocacy of Dr. Febo.

“Taller has been central to my life for 36 years,” said Dr. Febo. “I am proud of all we have been able to accomplish during my tenure as Board Chair and then, Executive Director. Today, Taller is a dynamic, growth-oriented arts institution documenting and sharing with others the vibrant character of the Puerto Rican and Latino community. I prepare for my retirement knowing that Taller has a strong Board, committed staff, and wonderful advocates across the city and state. I have every confidence in Taller moving forward and I look forward to



helping ensure the success of my successor, once selected. “

Knowing of Dr. Febo's desire to retire, Taller's Board of Directors established a search committee, which has been working diligently to develop the necessary strategies to execute a careful succession plan. The Committee's focus is on avoiding any interruption in leadership while identifying, recruiting, and hiring the next Taller Executive Director to guide the organization into its next phase of growth. A job position will be widely circulated in the coming weeks with specific instructions on the application process. For more information regarding Taller Puertorriqueño, please visit: <https://tallerpr.org/>.

CLEMENTE'S PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES RACIST GRADING PRACTICES: LIBERATION EDUCATION VS. GENTRIFICATION EDUCATION

By Sergio Mojica

The following article was written by Sergio Mojica, principal of Clemente High School. In this period of the COVID pandemic many of the glaring elements of colonialism/racism have been unveiled, particularly issues of educational practices. In this article Mojica takes on one of the significant problems which our schools have to grapple with when working with Black and Latino youth, i.e., grading and failing our kids. Grades should not be seen as punishment and ways to force our students to think in a particular way. They should be guideposts to real learning outcomes and our ability to really understand the world about us, to act upon it, and transform it. Recently, a debate has ensued in the Clemente LSC around the issue of grading. It is against that backdrop that La Voz seeks to provide our community with a deeper dive into this discourse of how grading affects our children.

What do you want for your children? Do you want them to be led and dominated by others? Domesticated employees of an uncaring system or independent leaders in charge of their lives? In education, we typically place the highest value on grades. Students who receive A's on their report cards are categorized as smart and praised for their intelligence. We often celebrate "good grades" on tests by posting them on our fridges. We have been well conditioned to desire A's and B's, dismiss C's as just average, and shun D's and F's. Students who get D's and F's are often thought of as lazy without acknowledging how hard a student may have to work to earn that D or F.

When grades come out, feelings and opinions emerge over simple letters, but those letters don't tell the stories of how students struggled, and what they learned.

Consider the following report card. What do these grades communicate about what a student truly knows or has learned in their classes? Can these grades tell us

Subject	Grade
Language Arts	C
Math	D
Science	A
Social Studies	B
Art	A
Spanish	F
PE	B

whether a student can engage in complex, sustained thought and conversations about big questions? Are they encouraged to ask questions and think critically, or are they being trained to follow orders – preparing them to fill the ranks of low-paying and unstable jobs. It is sad that something we value so highly actually tells us nothing about what a student genuinely knows. In this case, grades appear to reward task completion, compliance, repetition, an ability to memorize words and regurgitate them on cue, but not illustrate a student's understanding. It stifles a young person's intellectual curiosity, which is essential to mental health, growth, and wisdom. It has become a game that some students know how to play. Others do not.

I don't know a life without grades. Growing up, I had grades. My high school grades helped me get into community college; my Midlands Tech grades got me into Southeastern University; my SEU grades got me into DePaul University. If I showed you my transcripts, they would be full of grades, and none of them could tell you a thing about how much knowledge I had gained -- or not.

Did you know that the grading system originated in factories of the 1700s as a way of determining if the shoes made on the assembly line were "up to grade." (Hartmann, 2005)

The current grading system can be used as a tool to control students. When well-meaning teachers grade for participation, like raising your hand, talking in class, or talking too much, they are grading (rewarding/penalizing) for behavior. When a teacher gives a student extra credit, they are rewarding that student for a behavior.

According to the data, it is evident that the way we currently "do school" is not designed for children of color, but reflects a White male culture. Failure to connect

with this culture's norms is interpreted as a demonstrable lack of intelligence, not as a failure on the part of schools and teachers.

You might ask, "What is the problem with that?" The simple answer --- the current practice champions White culture while it marginalizes a student's home culture. Because my father was in the US Air Force, I went to school on military bases. Whenever we returned to the Bronx, my cousins would tease me. They would call me an Oreo, or a coconut, and later in life -- Carlton. Growing up on military bases, internalizing school narratives about US exceptionalism, had opened a chasm between me and my Puerto Rican cousins in the Bronx. I was indoctrinated, and even in their tender years, my cousins knew it. My beautiful Puerto Rican cultural heritage was all but stripped away to make me a good American student.

That is not what I want for any of my students, and I hope it is not what you want for your kids. Culturally responsive education draws on the way a student learns and thus leaves intact their self-image. It honors a student's culture and makes room for students who do not learn in traditional ways. Instead of learning a Euro-centric view of the world, it values the shared experiences of a community and elevates our cultural classics to the same level we have elevated European classics such as the works of Shakespeare and Mozart.

(Continue on page 18)



POLICE MURDER OF LA VILLITA YOUTH: REST IN POWER ADAM TOLEDO

By La Voz Staff

We in The Puerto Rican Cultural Center were enraged by the police murder of Adam Toledo, and our deepest condolences go out to his family, while at the same time we cry out our highest condemnation of the racist institution of policing. The death of Adam Toledo has to be seen in the historical context of how Mexican lives, particularly Black and Brown Mexicans, have been devalued from the very days of the U.S. conquest and seizure of 53% of Mexico's land mass. In order to justify the occupation of this land (the homeland of indigenous people for thousands of years and Mexicans for hundreds of years) the U.S. settlers immediately created a discourse that portrayed Mexicans as banditos or criminals. Ever since then, and at every stage of the occupation, everything has been done to criminalize Mexicans. They were portrayed as lazy, gun wielding criminals; this was particularly used against heroic Mexicans who resisted that occupation such as Tiburcio Vázquez, Gregorio Cortez, and Juan "Chano" Cortina. This criminalization continued throughout most of

the 20th century as the film industry developed, and is propagated in all Western and cowboy movies. The only good Mexican was a sleeping Mexican, otherwise they were villainous figures such as thugs and bandits.

The criminalization of Mexicans was also visible in the politics that framed the use of cannabis when it was promoted as a Mexican drug called marijuana and in the way Trump used it in his anti-immigrant rhetoric. It was this discourse which permitted extra judicial and White supremacist terrorist organizations such as the Santa Fe Ring of New Mexico and the Texas Rangers to lynch thousands of Mexicans throughout the Southwest all the way up to the 1930s. There is no doubt, therefore, that the police murder of Adam Toledo cannot be detached from this backdrop of White supremacy, which informs the paradigm of race in this society, and which frames the thinking of many of our teachers, police personnel, and those who are supposed to provide social services. The antithesis of this paradigm is to raise our consciousness and go beyond the basic cultural sensitivity training.

We must combat the criminalization of our communities and our youth when people try to bring up the time Adam Toledo was murdered, where his mother was when he was murdered, or if he was connected to gangs. To fight the terror of White supremacy and actually heal these deep wounds caused by colonialism we are called to understand deeply the historical and generational trauma, which our communities and youth face. If police are supposed to protect they should act as guardians of the people rather than warriors against the people.



(Continued from page 17)

Competency-based grading, when implemented correctly, communicates achievement and learning to students, parents, and educators. It motivates students to continue learning. It does away with traditional grades altogether, and provides students, parents, and teachers a clear learning path for students to follow and teachers to teach.

For far too long, we have had school and education done to us without considering us. We have placed our trust in a system with the expectation that it would educate and elevate us, when in fact it has been forcing us to be ashamed of our cultural identity, while preparing us to assume roles that replicate current generational inequalities. Culturally responsive teaching and competency-based grading helps students know their strengths, know themselves, and become critical thinkers, while it gives them the

tools to advocate for themselves.

It is time that we demand that education in Black and Latino communities no longer function to groom the next generation of low-level workers, but that, as in wealthy public and private schools, the learning community value critical thinking and real world applications of knowledge more than the memorization of dates of European conquests. Our beautiful cultural identity is a powerful but untapped asset. It should not be erased; it should be celebrated. When kids see themselves genuinely reflected in the curriculum, their connection to deep and complex concepts are no longer abstractions; they are intimate and profound ideas that they are hungry to explore. That is the beginning of wisdom, and it is a giant leap toward Latino empowerment.

LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



Community As A Campus
@CommunityAsACampus · Community Organization

Send Message

Home About Photos Events More ▾

Like

Search

More

SUCCESSFUL FIRST VIRTUAL PUERTO RICAN/LATINX HEALTH SUMMIT

By Aida L Giachello

The Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago, in partnership with organizations across the US, and with public and private support, held the first virtual Puerto Rican/Latinx Health Summit on April 21-22. Many of the sessions were livestreamed on Facebook.

The health summit set out to examine and disseminate the latest information regarding the state of Latinx Health. The summit featured engaging discussions on the social, economic, educational, and political determinants of healthcare that have an impact on the social-well-being of Puerto Ricans and other Latinx communities.

The recent focus on COVID-19 infections, testing, deaths, and vaccinations has been an unfortunate necessity. The shift of our attention, however, has impaired our alertness. There has been a significant increase in deaths among minorities and other vulnerable groups beyond the pandemic. Latinx and other minority communities have been experiencing poor access to quality medical care and poor management of chronic conditions such as: type 2 diabetes, asthma, cancer, and cardiovascular conditions

Further, the summit investigated the great health disparities of Puerto Ricans living in the US, as data indicate that Puerto Ricans compared to White non-Hispanics and other Latino groups are most likely to have: high obesity, high type 2 diabetes, higher CVD risk factors, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, higher infant mortality (due to receiving late prenatal care, smoking during pregnancy maternal complications), high depression and serious psychological distress, Dementia/Alzheimer (AD), Hispanics/Latinos have more severe symptoms associated with AD than any other ethnic group studied. About 87% of Puerto Ricans with AD had a significant lower age of onset (68 years of age), high alcohol and substance abuse, including opioids, high cancer rates, particularly among poor Puerto Rican and Latinx communities in Chicago poor sleeping patterns, poor sleep quality, and sleep disorders (e.g., sleep apnea), poor

access to health and medical care due to linguistic, cultural, and financial barriers

The Health Summit included health and human services professionals, community leaders, and news media. The virtual summit was free-of-charge and all were welcome.

The Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago is grateful for the sponsorship and financial support of companies and organizations, including: The National Network of Library of Medicine-Midwest Region with the NIH All of Us Program; Blue Cross and Blue Shields of IL, Cigna Health Insurance, Walmart of Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican Association of Retailers, Cabrera Capital, Markets, Inc. In addition, we appreciate the collaboration of academic institutions, including: the University of Illinois-Chicago's Institute for Minority Health Research, Northwestern University, Dept of Preventive Medicine's research on Disparities In Sleep and Cognition among Older Adults (DISCO), the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative; the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, El Rincón community services, Pilsen Wellness, HAS, Inc., ASI NE Healthcare Services, Humboldt Park Health, and Healthy Communities Foundation, among many others.

Recorded videos of most of the sessions will be available shortly on our website at puertoricanhealthsummit.com. We are planning a series of upcoming educational webinar that will be announced on our website and on our social Media: <https://twitter.com/prhealthsummit>, <https://www.facebook.com/Puerto-Rican-Health-Summit-109963021144735>, <https://www.instagram.com/puertoricanhealthsummit/>



MERCADO DE SALUD DE WEST TOWN

El mercado de salud West Town de Amita Health
Abierto al público / Educación nutricional

Cuando

Cada Jueves

JUNIO 3 – OCTUBRE 28, 2021

12 - 6 PM

Donde

AMITA Health Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center
2233 W. Division St.

*En la esquina de la calle Division y la Oakley



Personas con LINK reciben \$15 fichas para comprar productos
Gasta \$1 usando el LINK y te dan \$3 para compra



Encuétranos en las redes sociales:

West_town_health_market

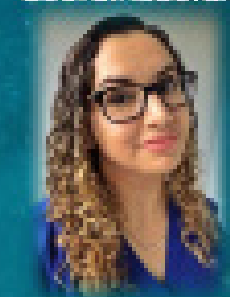
facebook.com/WestTownHealthMarket





Partner

Coordinadora:



Dra. Desirée Cotto-Figueroa

Taller FUTUR@ ASTRONOM@

Para
Estudiantes de Escuela Superior
Fechas: 14-18 de junio y 21-25 de junio
Horario: 12:00pm-3:30pm

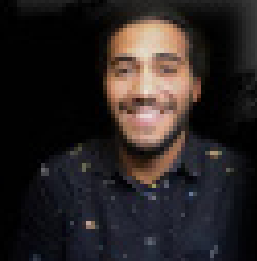
Aplicación: <https://forms.gle/GFvpAhGW3GxHDWSJ6>

A Distancia y Libre de Costo Fecha Límite 30 de abril

Instructores especializados en Astrofísica, Astronomía y Ciencias Planetarias



Dra. Mariangelly Díaz Rodríguez.



Andy López Oquendo



Alberto Rosado Marín



Marialis Rosario Franco

*Se otorgará Certificado de Participación

RITA MORENO: JUST A GIRL WHO DECIDED TO GO FOR IT

EXCLUSIVE SCREENING & FUNDRAISER

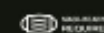
Enjoy the critically-acclaimed documentary on the life of the legendary Puerto Rican actress



MAY 27, 2021 6:30 PM

SMALL IN-PERSON SCREENING
at Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center (4040 W. Armitage Ave.)
including a post-film Q & A with Director Madelon Pérez and Producer Ila Wiler

Limited Capacity: 50 people
(socially-distanced in a room for 230)



Tickets: \$5 (includes cocktail hour and hors d'oeuvres at 6:30pm)

"Rita Moreno: Just A Girl Who Decided to Go for It" is a highly entertaining and poignant ride through Moreno's improbable life and career.

— IndieWire

Tickets only available at srbcc.org



Registration is open!

Stowe Dual Language School Preschool Program

3444 W. Wabansia
(773)534-4175
www.stowe.cps.edu

Programming available for 3 & 4 year-olds

- Free, no-cost preschool program
- Dual Language Program Available
- Play-based Learning
- High-Quality, Research-Based Curriculum
- Free meals

To apply online go to www.ChicagoEarlyLearning.org
To apply over the phone call: (312) 229-1690



Images Pre-Pandemic



Solicitudes se aceptan para el
Programa Preescolar

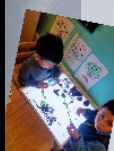
Escuela Lenguaje Dual Stowe

3444 W. Wabansia
(773)534-4175
www.stowe.cps.edu

Asientos Disponibles Para Niños de 3 y 4 Años

- Programa Preescolar Gratuito
- Programa de Lenguaje Dual Disponible
- Programa de Aprendizaje Personal
- Aprendizaje Basado en Juegos
- Currículo de Alta Calidad Basado en la Investigación
- Desayuno y Almuerzo Gratis

Para aplicar por internet:
www.ChicagoEarlyLearning.org
Para aplicar por teléfono llame: (312) 229-1690



Imágenes Pre-Pandemia

