

EN HISTÓRICA PROCLAMACIÓN GOB. PRITZKER DECLARA DISTRITO CULTURAL BORICUA

(EN LA DIVISION ENTRE WESTERN Y PULASKI)



LA VOZ Est. 2004
DEL PASEO BORICUA

DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH WE CELEBRATE MORE THAN FIVE DECADES OF BLACK & PUERTO RICAN SOLIDARITY



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NMPRAC PRESENTS ¡TAÍNO VIVE! CARIBBEAN INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE



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PHOTO BY ELIAS CARMONA

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF LA VOZ DEL PASEO BORICUA NEWSPAPER!



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.



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Educación Para la Salud un Reto a las Enfermedades Crónicas



Por Raquel Delgado

Continúa el serie de Educación para la Salud en el Banco de Alimentos La Bodega del Barrio. El 11 de enero de 2024, la trabajadora de salud comunitaria Raquel Delgado fue la anfitriona de la segunda clase del año. La clase se llevó a cabo en el Trans Chicago Empowerment Center. La presentación enfocó en condiciones crónicas y su prevalencia en nuestra comunidad, específicamente en las personas de color. Esta presentación fue parte de una serie que abarca las herramientas de autocontrol de las enfermedades crónicas que enseña cambios en el estilo de vida que pueden reducir en gran medida el riesgo de enfermedades crónicas como enfermedades cardíacas, diabetes, y muchas más. Las próximas clases serán a las 11:00am 03/07/24, 03/21/24, 04/04/24, 04/18/24, 05/2/24, 05/16/24, 05/30/24, 06/13/24 y en el mismo lugar, The Trans Chicago Empowerment Center, 2753 W. Division. Por favor únete a nosotros. Si usted o alguien que conoce necesita asistencia de autogestión u otro tipo de asistencia de salud, educación, vivienda o negocios, comuníquese con nuestra trabajadora comunitaria Raquel Delgado al (773) 342 0855, o envíe un correo electrónico a raqueld@prcc-chgo.org. Las personas sin cita previa son bienvenidas, oficina 3411 W North Ave. Chicago IL, 60647.

COMMUNITY AS A CAMPUS (C.A.A.C.) BRIEFS:

CAAC Neighborhood School Profile:

Celebrating 50 Years of Roberto Clemente Community Academy

Principal, Devon Morales and Assistant Principal, Tamarah Ellis

Named after the famous Puerto Rican baseball player and humanitarian, Roberto Clemente, Humboldt Park's flagship highschool, Roberto Clemente Community Academy (RCCA) is located in East-Humboldt Park. It is a school with 775 students. 60% Latin X, 30% African-American, 3% White and 6% Asian.

RCCA is a wall-to-wall International Baccalaureate school that offers a world-class education. Students are also offered graduation pathways in Careers to Education programs such as

Culinary Arts, Radio Broadcasting, and Public Allied Health. Moreover, Northeastern Illinois University provides a college prep-class and dual enrollment. The attendance rate is 79% for SY 24. RCCA has 364 English Language Learners (ELL) students. More than half those students only recently made Chicago their home.

Key highlights for SY24:

- 79% YTD Attendance
- 90% of all students passed their classes in DEC 2023
- 91% Freshman On Track Rate to graduate on time as of DEC 2023
- Increase in enrollment to 775
- 93% of English Language learners and Diverse Learning students pass all classes
- 80% decrease in out of school suspension
- Increase parent conferences by 35%

Other highlights for SY24:



- \$130 000.00 secured for after-school programs serving over 60 students and employs 19 staff members
- Opening of the Welcome Center
- Newcomers participate in the Explore Chicago after-school program where they venture out into the city for great sights and eats.
- Other programs are Lego Club, Girls Can we Talk, Drama Club, Boys Basketball Team 1st in Conference, Award winning Archery Team.

CAAC Urban Agriculture Coordinator to Present at The 19th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit

On March 7, 2024, at 10:00 AM, Dahlia Quintanilla will be virtually presenting at the 19th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit. Her presentation will focus on the Classroom 2 Table program CAAC is running with 10 partner schools and community-based organizations.

Dahlia will present the "Classroom to Table" program as a solution to food apartheid and creating sustainable food ecosystems. We encourage your participation, support, and sharing of the virtual event. Tickets are free - register here.



Welcome New CAAC Sports Administrator!



Community as a Campus Education Initiative is proud to announce that Monica Lozada will take on the leadership role of CAAC Sports. Monica has already made many contributions to the program, her latest, the designing of the 2024 Girls and Boys Basketball schedule. The schedule was developed with the input from participating school administrators and coaches.

Monica will lead a team of two facilitators who will be present at each game to ensure game day success and safety; Brianna Álvarez and Epifanio Robles. Monica will also oversee the security team, scorekeepers, referees, and the general administration of the program. Join us in welcoming Monica to her new position.

The National Puerto Rican Museum Presents ¡Taíno Vive! Caribbean Indigenous Resistance

By La Voz Staff

On Saturday, January 6th, Three Kings Day, The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture (NMPRAC) opened ¡Taíno Vive! Caribbean Indigenous Resistance, an exhibit on loan from the Smithsonian Institution (SITES) in collaboration with the Field Museum of Chicago and the Concilio Taíno Guatu Ma Cu-a Borikén.

This exhibition tells the story of the Caribbean from the perspective of Indigenous survival and resistance. It is dedicated to affirming Taíno life and valuing Indigenous knowledge for the people of the Caribbean and beyond.

During the opening, Verónica Ocasio, Director of Education and Programming, said, “Taíno Vive stands not just as an exhibit but as a concerted effort to reclaim our history, identity, and culture while preserving and promoting our rich oral histories and traditions. Central to this effort is education. Who tells our story, how it’s presented, where it’s shared, and who has access to it are all critical questions that shape our understanding of who we are as a people.”

¡Taíno Vive! aims to educate visitors on the colonial narratives that have historically erased and omitted our incredible contributions from the pages of history. The exhibit’s title harnesses its essence: ¡Taíno Vive! Caribbean Indigenous Resistance. As laws are enacted in this country to censor the history

of our people, the LGBTQ+ community, people of color, and indigenous communities, there is no better time than the present to educate oneself.

Almost 500 visitors attended the opening weekend celebration, including Congresswoman Delia Ramírez, Senator Omar Aquino, State Representative Lilian Jiménez, Alderperson Jessie Fuentes, and Judge Jesse G. Reyes. Maraliz Salgado opened the exhibit with a Taíno blessing that incorporated a land acknowledgment honoring the indigenous people of

Illinois and our Taíno ancestors.

The exhibition includes 20 educational panels curated by the Smithsonian, 21 Taíno artifacts on loan from the Field Museum, as well as traditional Taíno attire, jewelry, objects, and instruments on loan from Concilio Taíno Guatu Ma Cu-a Borikén of Puerto Rico. Jesse and Maria Sanchez, Puerto Rican contractors, constructed a life-size Bohío to add an immersive experience to the exhibition. All visitors can create Taíno inspired works of art, watch a short video, read books, or play the güiro, claves, or maracas. NMPRAC proudly commissioned artist Cristian Roldán to create a Taíno-inspired mural to adorn the stairwell leading up to the exhibit; it is visually captivating and sets the tone for the exhibit.



You can visit NMPRAC Tuesday - Friday from 10 am - 5 pm and Saturday from 10 am - 2 pm. This exhibit runs through June 16, 2024. To schedule a private tour or field trip, please visit our website at nmprac.org

HASTA SIEMPRE CHRIS

By Luis Alejandro Molina

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center pays tribute to Christine Anne “Chris” Geovanis, a lifelong solidarity activist with the struggle of the Puerto Rican Diaspora and for Puerto Rico’s Right to self-determination, who passed away on the evening of February 11, 2024. Her partner, Richard “Dick” Reilly, was also an exemplary solidarity activist. He passed away in 2020.

The PRCC met Chris and Dick in the early 1990s. For the next decade, they stood shoulder-to-shoulder with us during one of the most challenging periods of The PRCC’s existence, confronting State repression in the form of FBI-driven media attacks as a consequence of FBI agent provocateur Rafael Ángel Marrero’s allegations. Marrero, who, in a textbook example of COINTEL-PRO tactics against progressive movements, infiltrated The Puerto Rican Cultural Center’s day care program and affiliated high school, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, courted several Puerto Rican woman activists and married the eldest daughter of a prominent Puerto Rican activist family with two members of the family in prison who were charged with revolutionary activities and imprisoned since the 80s.

With Marrero as its mouthpiece, the US Attorney and FBI convened,



in the course of a decade, four grand juries and spent more than \$2 MILLION dollars trying to charge and indict various PRCC activists, in particular José E. López, the co-founder and Executive Director of the Center.

Chris played an outstanding role as part of the Friends of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, working with progressive media and helping put together talking points, especially in defense of The PRCC’s community work and educational reform efforts at Clemente. She wrote drafts of press releases and conducted press training for the family members of prisoners as

President Clinton’s 1999 release of the prisoners drew near.

She challenged other White activists and educators, who, while seemingly progressive, disparaged The PRCC behind its back by defending our work and principles.



She published, under her byline, a comprehensive article in Chicago INK, a small progressive paper based out of the University of Chicago, titled “Battle at the Cultural Divide: Latinos Struggle to Preserve Cultural Identity and grass-roots Autonomy at Chicago’s Clemente High School” that contextualized the attacks on The PRCC by naming the players: The US Attorney, FBI, the Real-Estate forces, and the right-wing Puerto Rican, Cuban and other reactionary Latino elements that came together to try and destroy the work and reputation of The PRCC.

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center weathered that attack. It rebuilt its community and political work ten times stronger to support the right to Puerto Rico’s self-determination, becoming a model for the struggle of the Puerto Rican Diaspora. Thank you, Chris Geovanis, for contributing to our struggle at that crucial time.

Chicago Sun-Times
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1997
Late Sports Final

Grandma's car advice a TV hit
Page 27
The Star-Tribune

Cowboy rides in for DuPage court
Page 8
The Star-Tribune

ABA seeks halt to death penalty
Page 4

Puerto Rican politics overtake Clemente classrooms

School funds used to push terrorists' release

School Board report: Education being ignored

BY MICHELLE CAMPBELL AND MICHAEL SNEED
STAFF WRITERS

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Poverty program money at Chicago's Roberto Clemente High School was used to support a campaign to promote Puerto Rican independence and free convicted terrorists, a Chicago Sun-Times investigation has found.

The money helped turn the school into a hotbed of Puerto Rican nationalism underwritten by taxpayers.

For example, school poverty funds were used to help backfill a fund-raiser for the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War held at the school, ILETN Western.

An Internal School Board report, obtained by the Sun-Times, found that "the political climate and divisiveness thwart academic progress at a level so significant that the education of the students is being ignored."

In some classrooms even the display of the American flag is forbidden, inside school sources said. Speakers and artists brought in at school expense for Clemente programs frequently show up at rallies pushing for Puerto Rican independence, documents show.

The monthlong Sun-Times investigation found that some school officers in charge of curriculum and finance have ties to the National Liberation Movement (MLN), an organization whose goal is to free more than a dozen people

Public school money was used to bring speakers and entertainers to the Puerto Rican Cultural Center for promoting Puerto Rican independence, documents show. Writings on the center's wall read: "Soon enough the shall come when the strength of my flag shall break the bars that imprison it," and "Long live a free Puerto Ric!"

Turn to next page



Puerto Rican Archives

Preserving Community Memory Symposium

Two-day suite of programs focused on Puerto Rican archives—both on the island and in the diaspora—hosted in collaboration between **Digitizing the Barrio** (an archival project of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center), **The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture**, and the **Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago**.

Fri., April 5 & Sat., April 6
10am-4pm • NMPRAC 3015 W Division St.

Panel Topics & Presenters

Puerto Rican Archives / Archiving 101 / The Politics & Ethics of Memory History & Memory Making / Building Personal Archives / Archiving Art

Hilda Ayala González, Archivera General de Puerto Rico

Rafael V. Capó García, Memoria Decolonial

Herbert Duran, CENTRO

Cristina Fontáñez Rodríguez, CENTRO

Javier E. Laureano, Archivo Comunitario LGBTQ+ de Puerto Rico

Cármén T. Pérez, Biblioteca Nacional de Puerto Rico

Diana Ramos Gutiérrez, Archivo Histórico de Vieques

Keynote

Yomaira C. Figueroa-Vásquez, Director of CENTRO

Culminating Session

Barrio Under Siege: Memories of Political Repression
with PRCC Executive Director José E. López and Attorney Michael Deutsch

Symposium Organizing Committee:

Digitizing the Barrio: Angelica Hernandez, Margaret Power and Michael Rodriguez-Muñiz

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago: Daniel Atkinson and Brianna Van Schoyck

The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture: Veronica Ocasio



Event Sponsors

Digitizing the Barrio is a project of the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center. This event is made possible with the support of the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). We are also grateful for funding from the University of California, Berkeley and its Department of Sociology.

The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture and its Archives and Collections Research Center is grateful for funding and support from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), and Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Lead support for the 2023-24 season of MCA Talks is made possible by The Richard and Mary L. Gray Lecture Series through a generous gift to the Chicago Contemporary Campaign. Generous support is provided by The Antje B. and John J. Jelinek Endowed Lecture and Symposium on Contemporary Art; the Kristina Barr Lectures, which were established through a generous gift by The Barr Fund to the Chicago Contemporary Campaign; The Gloria Brackstone Solow and Eugene A. Solow, MD, Memorial Lecture Series; and the Allen M. Turner Tribute Fund, honoring his past leadership as Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Exhibition

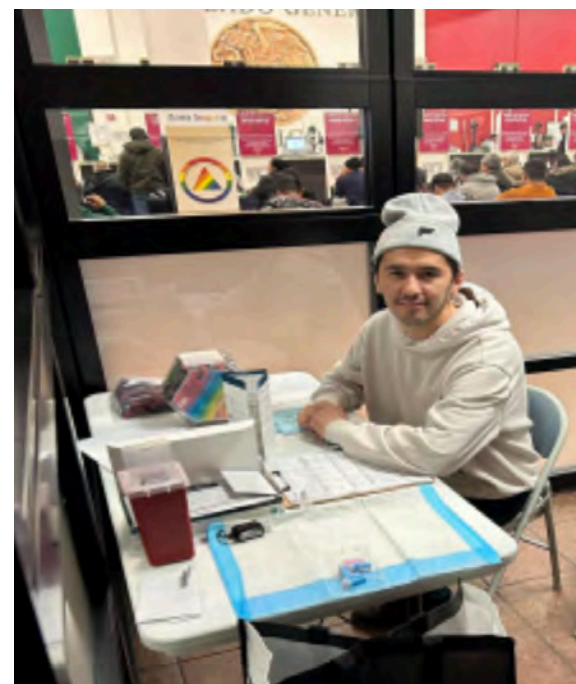
Lead support is provided by the Harris Family Foundation in memory of Bette and Neison Harris, Zell Family Foundation, Cari and Michael Sacks, the Mellon Foundation, and the Terra Foundation for American Art. Major support is provided by the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation and Jana and Bernardo Hees. Generous support is provided by Marilyn and Larry Fields. This exhibition is part of Art Design Chicago, a citywide collaboration initiated by the Terra Foundation for American Art that highlights the city's artistic heritage and creative communities.

Bodega del Barrio Banco de Alimentos Ofrece Pruebas Móviles en el Consulado de México

Por Edgar Rossi

La Bodega del Barrio Banco de alimentos está ofreciendo servicios móviles; pruebas rápidas, y asesoramiento gratuitos sobre el VIH, pruebas de ITS, referencias para tratamientos y recursos según sea necesario. El consejero evaluador, Edgar Rossi, está organizando grupos de intervención focalizados. Estos grupos se centran en ayudar a las personas que viven con o sin VIH a obtener acceso a servicios de prevención y gestión. Estos grupos están diseñados para ayudar en la prevención del VIH con un enfoque en hombres que tienen sexo con hombres, homosexuales, bisexuales, transgénero y heterosexuales de alto riesgo, ayudar a las persona viviendo con VIH a gestionar su situación. Si usted o alguien que conoce puede beneficiarse de estos grupos de intervención, comuníquese con nosotros, los servicios de participación son gratuitos y confidenciales. Se están realizando pruebas móviles en la ciudad de Chicago y los suburbios circundantes; discotecas, salones y spas, el Consulado de México, y la Universidad DePaul. Las pruebas móviles también están disponibles para reunirse con usted en su ubicación. ¿Va a celebrar una fiesta? ¿Va a anfitriar una reunión? ¿Va a

pasar tiempo con amigos? ¡Llámenos! Haremos que nuestro equipo se acerque a usted para brindarle pruebas de detección de VIH, pruebas de ITS, grupos de intervención según lo solicite y kits de condones; los servicios son siempre gratuitos. “Debe ser el cambio que desea ver en el mundo”. Llame para obtener un cronograma completo de las fechas y lugares de las pruebas. 773-342-0855. Edgarr@prcc-chgo.org. 3411 W. North Ave.



100x35+16 Annual Event Celebrates El Rescate's 13th Anniversary

By Zenaida López

On March 3, 2024, El Rescate Transitional Living Program will celebrate its thirteenth anniversary. To the untrained eye, one can assume that the program has unlimited resources. But the reality is far different. For the first two years the program received no funding, relying on car washes, rummage sales, and selling food to make ends meet. A year later, El Rescate received funding from the city and the state.

El Rescate specifically provides services for LGBTQIA+ and HIV-positive youth ages 18 to 24. Beyond being a one-of-a-kind program, El Rescate is unique in its approach to counseling and programming. We provide our residents substantive and culturally relevant services, designed to empower them with all the tools necessary to help transition them into independent living. In the process, we provide them counseling to help them overcome any internal or external obstacles that may be hindering their progress into independent living. Using these methods, in the past 13 years we have been able to successfully transition scores of residents into independent living.

But above and beyond all this, what makes El Rescate successful is the community from which it sprouted. Through all its hardships, the residents of the program are made to feel as if they have an extended family of supporters instead of simply a small staff of case managers.

We believe that in the past 13 years El Rescate has become a premier

program, and what began as a community solution to a community problem turned into a national and international program addressing LGBTQIA+ homelessness.

El Rescate was built on the pillars of the Puerto Rican community of Humboldt Park and without the community the program would have long ceased to exist. But we are Boricua strong.



During Black History Month We Celebrate More Than Five Decades of Black & Puerto Rican Solidarity

By Luis Alejandro Molina

In old prisons half a century ago. At marches and rallies across the country. With different representatives. For freedom and Independence. Expungement. Ousting the U.S. Navy from Vieques. A Battered Black woman who fought back. A ground-breaking collection of political prisoner biographies from different movements. International Tribunals across the decades. The younger generation demands freedom for its elders. Closing the circle. The Next generation.

This is the thread of struggle and freedom between the Black Liberation Movement and the Puerto Rican Independence Movement

For Black History Month, The Puerto Rican Cultural Center is honored to publish a representative collage of solidarity between Puerto Rican independence and Black Freedom Struggles over the last 60 years.

1. Rafael Cancel Miranda and Herman Bell (with sunglasses). Leavenworth Prison, KS Circa 1970s.
2. Myrna Salgado, José E. López, Michael Deutsch, and ex-Marion prisoner at Federal Building rally, circa mid-1970s
3. Rally to Free the Puerto Rican Nationalists, Washington, DC, May 1977 (marching to the Washington Monument) Andrés Figueroa Cordero, The Puerto Rican Nationalist was pardoned by President Jimmy Carter ahead of Rafael Cancel Miranda, Lolita Lebrón, Oscar Collazo, and Irvin Flores Rodríguez because he had terminal cancer. From left- Unknown woman holding banner, Antonio Colón, Juan Antonio Corretjer, Secretary General of the Puerto Rican Socialist League, Omowale Kefing of the Afrikan People's Socialist Party, Myrna Salgado, María Cueto (Mexican grand jury resister), and Maria Gallegos.
4. Leavenworth Federal Prison, Circa early 1990s. First row, 2nd person from right to left, Jihad Abdulmumit, 4th person Kazi Toure. Top row, Oscar López Rivera, 2nd from right.
5. Leavenworth Federal Prison, Circa early 1990s. From right to left: Kazi Toure, Oscar López Rivera.
6. Chicago, IL 1980s. The PRCC, State Rep. Constance "Connie" Howard, and the Black Community

worked together on the issue of expungement. The picture is of a march at Cook County Jail, located at 26th and California. José E. López, center of the crowd, is speaking.

7. Puerto Rican flag in the dark blue guayabera, José E. López. 3rd row and beyond, visually, from left to right: Terry Bisson holding a sign neck-high, ex-political prisoners Luis Rosa with hat on, face partially obscured by the upraised arm, Felix Rosa with hat on, María Elena Gallegos, (deceased) PRCC activist, behind her with hat partially off, Roberto Caldero. Photo credit: Steven Shavers

(Continued on page 9)



8. Cover of Can't Jail the Spirit, 1985- This ground-breaking educational collection of biographies of political prisoners in the US was compiled by the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown and published by the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War.
9. On May 1, 2003, the US Navy officially abandoned the use of Vieques as a training ground for maneuvers and war games, culminating in a struggle that had been ongoing for more than 60 years and was supported for the last decade by church and peace groups worldwide. The National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War and its descendant, the National Boricua Human Rights Network, as well as other organizations in the diaspora, converged on Vieques on this day to celebrate the victory and commemorate those activists who paved the way. Chicago was able to mobilize more than 50 activists for that weekend. In Chicago, community leaders rallied at a press conference. From left to right: Melvin Méndez, Pablo Medina, Juan Marcos Vilar (in the background), Madii Amill, José E. López, Jesse Jackson, Beti Guevara and Norma Peña.
10. FCI Lewisburg, PA Circa 1996-1998, Political Prisoner Jihad Abdulmumit, James Watson, Political Prisoner Edwin Cortés, Rev. Nozomi Ikuta of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Ministry (IPOC), and Political Prisoner Ricardo Jiménez.
11. Chicago, IL 2011- Minister Abel Muhammed of the Nation of Islam speaking at the "32 Days for 32 Years" closing event organized by the National Boricua Human Rights Network and Cafe Batey Urbano. A significant event in the campaign to free the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners eventually spread to New York and Puerto Rico. The event spanned 8 years.
12. Chicago, IL, Circa 2015 Black Political Prisoner Sekou Kambui, who spent 47 years behind bars, speaks at an educational hosted by the PRCC. He passed away in May 2017.
13. Chicago, IL- April 2022. PRCC activist Xiomara Rodríguez, wearing a "Bring Sundiata Home" beanie in solidarity with the Alliance to Bring Sundiata Home, stands in front of the community mural "Somos la Marejada del Futuro" (We are the wave of the future) on Oscar López Rivera that also depicts Black Political Prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and Native American Leonard Peltier, among others.
14. New York, 2019, Luis Alejandro Molina and former political prisoner Jihad Abdulmumit at an Alliance to Bring Sundiata Acoli Home meeting.
15. October 2021, New York- Activists Lumumba Bande, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Najha Zigbi Johnson, former director of institutional development at the Shabazz Center, and former political prisoners Oscar López Rivera and Sekou Odinga at the International Tribunal.
16. New York, NY, June 2021. Former political prisoners Herman Bell and Oscar López Rivera enjoyed discussion and dinner.
17. New York, NY, circa 2022. Former Black political prisoner Sekou Odinga and PRCC activist Jessie Fuentes.

(Continued from page 8)

Trans Empowerment Center Begins New Mentorship Program



By Demetrius Davenport

Promise for HIP (Peers Reaching Out and Modeling Intervention Strategies for high-impact prevention) is a community-level HIV/STD prevention intervention that relies on role model stories created by the community and peer advocates to reduce HIV risk behaviors and increase engagement related to HIV continuum of care.

Promise for HIP is based on several behavioral ideas. Promise for HIP begins with a community identification process to collect and analyze information about risk networks, sex, and drug risk behaviors that relates to the HIV continuum of care and identification of determinants of risk.

Peer advocates from the intervention population are recruited and trained to share the role model stories and show materials within their social networks. New role model stories are written to connect with behavior change within the intervention population.

The goal of the Promise for HIP group is to share positive messages to the populations about condom use, HIV testing, PrEP, PEP, engaging and/or re-engaging to care. To encourage significant movement by the community members toward consistent condom use with their main and non main partner. To significantly increase condom carrying among members of the community.

#Centerfold

#Centerfold

The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture Celebrates Women's History Month by Hosting Arte de La Borinqueña Opening March 2, 2024

By La Voz Staff

The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture is excited to announce our new collaborative exhibition, *Arte de La Borinqueña*, by Creator Edgardo Miranda-Rodríguez, on display from March 2 - October 26, 2024.

The public opening will be on March 2, 2024, from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm and will include a "Meet and Greet" with the award-winning graphic novelist and creator of the superhero La Borinqueña, Edgardo Miranda-Rodríguez, from 10:30 am - 1:00 pm.

Through the serialized comic medium, Miranda-Rodríguez has effectively emphasized the significance of narrating Puerto Rico's history, addressing contemporary social and environmental issues, and celebrating the diverse Puerto Rican Diaspora. *La Borinqueña* was launched in 2016 under Miranda-Rodríguez's studio, *Somos Arte*, where he serves as Creative Director and is recognized for his philanthropic contributions. The story emerged during a critical period for the Puerto Rican people, marked by an economic crisis and natural disasters in the Caribbean. *La Borinqueña* has transcended fiction, evolving into a philanthropic superhero movement with a collection of graphic novels, a special benefit anthology with DC Comics titled *Ricanstruction*, and noteworthy partnerships with NRDC, Chocolate Cortés, and others.

"We are thrilled to announce our collaboration with Edgardo Miranda-Rodríguez for the *Arte de La Borinqueña* exhibition at our Museum, kicking off Women's History Month. During our initial discussions, Edgardo shared that his inspiration stems from a tribute to the strength and resilience of Boricua women and our Afro and Indigenous ancestors. His

narrative deeply resonated with me, given the rarity of depictions showcasing Puerto Ricans as an Afro-Puerto Rican superheroine. We aspire for *La Borinqueña* to serve as a mirror for all our visitors, especially young Puerto Rican youth who don't see themselves reflected as Superheroes or Superheroines in mainstream comics. We hope that those who encounter *La*

Borinqueña will be inspired by her courage, compassion, and resilience," said Billy Ocasio, President and CEO of the National Puerto Rican Museum.

"I am honored to have the opportunity of bringing *Arte de La Borinqueña* to Chicago's National Puerto Rican Museum of Arts and Culture. This collection of original comic book artwork celebrates eight years of independently publishing my superhero graphic novel series, *La Borinqueña*. It is also a celebration of my ongoing commitment to producing stories that engage audiences internationally about our collective Puerto Rican experience and heritage. The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture embodies this as well as an institution committed to providing spaces to artists like myself of Puerto Rican heritage that push the boundaries of art, activism, and culture. I hope all

that visit this exhibition walk away inspired to read my stories, learn about Puerto Rico, and recognize the innate superpower that we all have to make a difference in each other's lives every day," said Edgardo Miranda-Rodríguez, writer and creator of *La Borinqueña*.

The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture welcomes the public for free during regular hours of operation. For additional programming, including classes, workshops, and family programs, please check our online calendar of events.



La Voz del Paseo Boricua: A Living Archive

By Michael Rodríguez Muñiz

La Voz del Paseo Boricua has reached a significant, even historic, milestone. Twenty years. I am sure none of us who contributed to the first issue—March 2004—could have imagined reaching this milestone. Our ambitions, at the time, were more modest and more immediate.

La Voz was born, above all, to aid the Puerto Rican struggle against gentrification and displacement. Along with the Regresa al Barrio and the Humboldt Park No Se Vende campaigns, the newspaper was one of the children of the Humboldt Park Participatory Democracy Project. PD—as it was affectionately known—was an initiative of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, spearheaded by members of the then Batey Urbano collective and the National Boricua Human Rights Network.

PD was launched two months before La Voz, in January 2004. Inspired by Latin American movements, from Chiapas, Mexico, to Porto Alegre, Brazil, PD challenged the idea that gentrification was natural and inevitable. It maintained, to the contrary, that gentrification was a colonial project, a deliberate mechanism to economically capitalize on and politically neutralize barrios and communities of color. With this analysis, it set out to build relationships with longstanding residents and address pressing needs in collaboration with the office of then Alderman Billy Ocasio.

Within weeks of door-knocking, PD activists realized that news of community initiatives and resources was not reaching many of the blocks and homes surrounding Paseo Boricua. Residents lacked information about vitally-needed housing support, educational opportunities, and health resources. Many were also unaware of the innovative and transformative work seeking to strengthen, stabilize, and sustain the community. This realization led to the PD pitching and producing the first issue of La Voz.

The first issue was humble, only four pages long, printed in black and

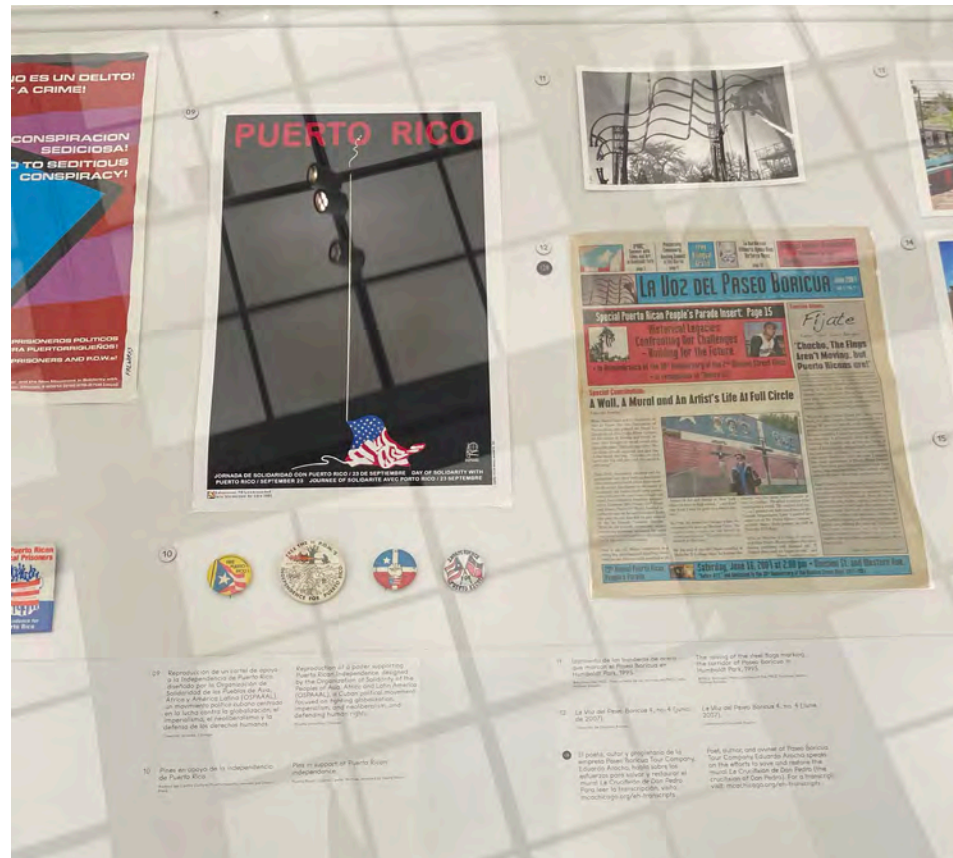
white. Space limitations made designing the issue a challenge. As its first editor and designer, I decided to privilege text over images. The result wasn't aesthetically pleasing, but its pages burst with timely news and relevant information, communicated in English and Spanish. Most importantly, it gave us proof of concept.

Within a few issues, La Voz doubled, then tripled in size. Some of its pages began to be printed in color. More and more copies were printed monthly, and its distribution map widened. It slowly became a staple in the community, the go-to for updates, announcements, commentaries, and coverage about community initiatives, diasporic developments, and Puerto Rico. La Voz has become, in other words, an archive, a barrio repository of recent and living Puerto Rican history.

Then, as now, it took a team to produce and maintain the newspaper. Countless writers, photographers, proofreaders, designers, editorial staff, web designers, and distributors have contributed to its two decades of success. Some contributors—such as La Voz's second editor and longtime designer, Jonathan Rivera Lizardi—are no longer with us. The twentieth anniversary belongs to them all, along with PRCC's leadership, who have ensured it has the technology, space, and funds to remain in existence.

The issues that motivated the creation of La Voz remain. There is still a struggle to preserve home and hope in Humboldt Park, to stake a claim on our pedacito de patria. And La Voz remains essential to that struggle, and the broader struggle for a decolonial future. To another twenty years!

Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz is an associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. He was one of the founders of Batey Urbano, the Humboldt Park Participatory Democracy Project, and La Voz del Paseo Boricua. He is today a board member of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center and co-leads the Digitizing the Barrio, The PRCC's archival project.



PRCC'S CHRC Program Supports Our New Immigrant Neighbors

By Ricardo Jiménez

The Community Health Response Corps (CHRC) Program of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) continues to focus on providing services to asylum seekers transported to Chicago from southern states. The CHRC Program has assisted more than 600 asylum seekers in the past two months by providing diverse services. These services include but are not limited to, referrals for legal assistance to initiate the residency process, providing COVID-19 vaccines and information, medical and mental health services, chronic disease management, housing assistance, clothing banks, HIV/STI testing, and counseling. Additionally, the program has provided referrals for food banks, clothing, personal protective equipment (PPE), and hygiene products while facilitating the linkage to medical care for any conditions they may have. During this process, many members of the LGBTQ community have been identified and provided with particular services.

However, it is important to note that the above services are tempo-



rary solutions for asylum seekers. As such, they need a Chicago City Key Identification, enabling them to access more resources and begin their residency process. To make this a reality, the CHRC Program leadership of The PRCC contacted Ana Valencia, City Clerk of Chicago, and her Director of Chicago City Key, Luis Fuentes, to request that they sponsor an event for asylum seekers to obtain a Chicago City Key Identification. Valencia promptly approved our request and now The PRCC is excited to announce that it will host a Chicago City Key identification event for asylum seekers on March 12th through the CHRC Program.

It is worth noting that applicants must meet specific requirements to receive a City Key identification.

If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact the CHRC Office at 773-417-7776 or visit them at 6005 W. Diversey. One can also utilize the QR code and provide their contact information, and the CHRC Team will follow up. The CHRC Team is looking forward to serving the asylum seekers and making their lives a little brighter.





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1:15 PM
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12:30 PM
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-  **12:30 PM** MEET AT LOCATIONS
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-  **1:15 PM** RALLY IN THE PARK
-  **1:30 PM** EARLY VOTING AT HUMBOLDT PARK LIBRARY 1605 N TROY

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Don't Panic, It's Gay Panic: Advocacy Through the Queer Gaze

By Kidany Camilo

All good things come in time. In leadership, this is one of the pivotal guidelines when practicing patience in the development of quality work. One of the fearless leaders of The Puerto Rican Cultural Center is Gabriella Perales, Associate Director of Vida/SIDA. Back in December of 2022, Perales took the initiative and was granted the Positive Action grant. This funding is through ViiV Healthcare, a multinational British company established to take an innovative approach to the challenges of HIV. Through a combination of community-focused approaches that include deep listening, grantmaking, community engagement, shared learning, and cultural arts programs, they ensure that the voices of people living with HIV inform everything they do. The Positive Action grant is one of ViiV Healthcare's way of supporting these community-led efforts on disrupting the system that oppresses the communities most disproportionately impacted by HIV.

Perales' development began with a series of critical interviews, recognizing pivotal members of the community, and letting them voice out the 21st century struggles LGBTQ2S+ folks face daily. The first person to be interviewed in March was none other than trans icon Lisa Isadora Cruz, and in April, Chicago nightlife stars, showboy Angel Cotto, and drag artist Christopher Concepción, also known as Valeria Méndez were interviewed, then in May, Teo Escalante, Humboldt Park community member and participant of Gay Business Initiatives at Vida/SIDA was interviewed. The project at its initial phase was planned to be a documentary exploring the lives of these four folks, highlighting the stigmas of Latiné queer folk. Until June 26th, when Perales onboarded Kidany Camilo to the Vida/SIDA team. Camilo is a theatre artist and professor, graduate of Purdue University with their Master in Fine Arts in Acting. The first months of their hiring, Perales brought up the project to Camilo in hopes they could take the lead and shape the project, trusting their artistic vision, wherever it may go; and where it went was to the theatre. The project turned into a Devised piece, a theatre-making style that collectively exploded in 1968 by the oppressed to share stories and feelings through movement, creative collaboration, and limitless exploration through imagination. It is personal, and it is raw. This method values artistic collaboration as the heartbeat of the performance, from the beginning of the process until the end. From this shift in direction arose the play titled *Gay Panic* (or *Los Expulsados del Paraíso*).

Widely referred to by its first title, *Gay Panic*, is an avant-garde exploration of the lives of five queer people, exposing the untreatable hematomas society has left on them. By telling their stories, they hope to disrupt the system and have one last chance to feel unapologetic queer joy with

each other as their chosen family. The play premiered January 13th and January 14th at Urban Theater Company, a theatre company that values innovative and accessible theater through a decolonized praxis. In their curator's note about the process for the production, Camilo explained that "Devising is cryptic, haunting, and at times exhausting, but nothing is more fulfilling than seeing an ensemble cross-pollinate their experiences into art. Starting this process I had the clear goal of exploring the cuir (our Spanish term for queer) Latiné experience, and with my ensemble, it was an intimate experience stepping into rehearsal every day. When curating, I'm a firm believer in letting your soul guide you, unplanned; at times dangerous, but trusting yourself, and your ensemble, has a big payoff. Hopefully you can see and feel, the payoff. And just in case, my gay agenda is to visibilize our bodies, dialects, and desires." The creative team for this production consisted of: Direction by Kidany Camilo, Lighting Design by Elly Humprys, Sound Design by Tonio Bruno, Projection Design by Gabriella Perales, Photography by Elias Cardona, Video Recording and Editing by Matt McCanna, and Co-Direction/Directorial Consultancy by Miranda González. Within just a week of publicizing it through social media, the production managed to sell out and was met with standing ovations both nights.

(Continued on page 17)



(Continued from page 16)

“First of all,” Perales commented, “my objective with this project more than anything was to visibilize the colorful spectrum of the queer community. It’s different seeing how oppression works than just hearing about it.” When tackling allyship for the trans community Perales explained that she “can’t speak for the trans community, I’m not trans. But I can amplify their voices and be there for them as we fight the war we have.” As the life expectancy of a trans person is lower than the age of 35, according to a study by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, she hopes to “create equitable spaces and increasing the Trans life expectancy.” And lastly, “hopefully,” she continued, “our communities can heal through art, and sometimes we just have to laugh to keep from crying, and our audiences got a taste of that feeling, the uncomfortable, darkly, comedic, truth.” After a whole year of meetings, planning, budgeting, and rehearsing, Perales got to finally reap what she sowed as the producer, an innovative way to advocate for communities vulnerable to HIV.



PRCC Mourns the Physical Loss of Eliot H. Rivera



By La Voz Staff

The PRCC would like to extend our condolences to Iván Vega and his family as they mourn the physical loss of their Grandfather Eliot H. Rivera. Rivera was a proud Puerto Rican and a longtime Logan Square resident. A Korean War veteran. Father of 9 children, grandfather of 16 grandchildren, and grandfather of 22 great-grandchildren. We honor and celebrate such an incredible legacy Rivera leaves behind at the age 91. We know his memory will live on in his loved ones and community members for generations to come!

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In Historic Proclamation Governor Pritzker Declares Boricua Cultural District

By *Xiomara Rodríguez*

On February 26, 2024 Governor JB Pritzker announced the State-Designated Cultural District program at a press conference at the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture. The program from the Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCEO) will provide a portion of \$3 million in funding to selected designated cultural areas intended to support economic development, tourism, and local entrepreneurship; the preservation of historic buildings, traditions, and languages; and the promotion of culturally informed education. In addition to announcing this program, Pritzker announced that The Puerto Rican Cultural Center and Puerto Rico Town were selected and officially designated as a 2023 State-Designated Cultural District in the State of Illinois. This was an incredible moment for Chicago's Puerto Rican community, along with the Puerto Rican Diaspora as a whole, because this is the first time in the United States that a Puerto Rican community will be officially recognized as a cultural district. Moreover, the Puerto Rican community in Chicago, mainly The



Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago, created the concept of State-Designated Cultural Districts, and it was only through their tireless efforts over the past seven years working with local elected officials like then-Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas and Representative Delia Ramirez that this idea became a reality.

This exciting new program stands as a testament to the legacy Puerto Ricans have built in Illinois and against the displacement and spacial deconcentration Puerto Ricans have had to endure for centuries at the hands of U.S. colonialism. Many Chicago Puerto Ricans can trace their family stories through the places they have been pushed out of, starting with Puerto Rico, then the Gold Coast, Lincoln Park, Lakeview, and most recently Humboldt Park. These are the stories that pushed The Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago to develop this State-Designated Cultural District program, because as Alderperson Jessie Fuentes remarked during the press conference "We have the right to generational wealth, thriving communities and affordable housing. Having those things shouldn't mean the eradication of our place".

Beyond being a historic moment for the Puerto Rican Community of Chicago, one of the most exciting announcements of the press conference is that six other cultural districts will now benefit from this program created by Chicago's Puerto Ricans. Bronzeville, Chinatown, Clark Street/Camino Clark in Rogers Park, Mahalia Jackson 79th Street in Chatham, and Little Village were also recognized as State-Designated Cultural Districts, which is a testament to the fact that when one of us wins we all win. Although Puerto Ricans in Chicago were the architects of this program, the experience of gentrification, displacement, erasure, disinvestment, and racism that inspired the program is an experience, unfortunately, shared by many marginalized communities in Chicago. This victory is made so much sweeter by the fact that we get to share the fruits of our labor with other communities of resistance throughout Illinois. The best is yet to come as the next generation of young people raised in these strong cultural communities become our next generation of proud leaders.



PRCC Welcomes Florida State Rep. Johanna López to Serve as Director of Policy

By Johanna López

Dear Esteemed Community Members,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself to you. My name is Johanna López, and I am honored to serve as the Director of Policy for The Puerto Rican Cultural Center. As a proud native of Puerto Rico, I am a graduate of both the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Mayagüez, and the Universidad Interamericana, Recinto de San Germán. My journey in advocacy

and education began as the first Latina Orange County Public Schools Teacher of the Year. Through this role, I had the privilege of shedding light on the systemic issues within our education system that marginalized our students. This journey propelled me into the realm of public service, where I became the first Latina School Board Member in Orange County Public Schools.

My commitment to education and community empowerment led me to champion the renaming of a middle school from “Stonewall Jackson” to “Roberto Clemente” Middle School, a symbolic step towards inclusivity and

representation. In 2022, I expanded my public service by representing District 43 in the Florida House of Representatives, proudly serving as the sole Boricua voice. During my tenure, I worked tirelessly to expand educational opportunities, advocate for affordable housing initiatives, and champion legislation supporting workers’ rights and social justice.

Beyond my governmental and educational roles, I have engaged with various community organizations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Teacher Advisory Council, the OCPS Foundation Board, and the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association. My dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion extends to my roles as a Diversity and Inclusion Strategist and Executive Director for both profit and non-profit organizations. My commitment to our community’s well-being is unwavering. I pledge to continue advocating for our rights and amplifying our voices.

Together, we can enact meaningful change and shape a future that honors our culture and values. I invite each of you to join me in this journey of empowerment and collaboration. Whether through volunteerism, community organizing, or extending a helping hand to our neighbors, every gesture of kindness strengthens the fabric of our community. Being born and raised in a project, raising my children as a single mom, and being a victim of domestic violence, I understand the struggles firsthand. I am genuinely excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and am confident that, by working together, we can create a community that we are all proud to call home.

With warm regards,

Johanna López



NY Rapper Gorilla Nems Brings Podcast to Paseo Boricua to Highlight the Amazing Organizing Work of Chicago’s Boricua Community

By José Soto

On January 25th, we had the pleasure of hosting Coney Island rapper, Gorilla Nems. Nems has become a social media star with his - “Don’t ever disrespect me” videos, which have gone viral, his podcast, and his catch phrase “Bing! Bong!” He made his way to Humboldt Park right here on the



Paseo Boricua. Nems was in town as he is on tour promoting his new album Rise of the Silverback. A PRCC staff member knew that Nems would be in Chicago on January 25th, and reached out to him to see if he would be interested in filming his podcast right here in Paseo Boricua, being that Nems is Puerto Rican. The podcast was filmed at the Casita de Don Pedro and joining Nems and his team were Adrian Rodríguez and Flaco Navaja who spoke about the community, the struggles and triumphs, plus all the work The Cultural Center has done for the last 50 years and continues to do. This was a special moment for the community and our culture as the thousands who tuned in to watch the podcast got to see what we have done and continue to do here. BING! BONG!

@outsidewithgorillanems, @nems_fyl

Photo by Michelle Groskopf

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