

CREATING CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Hispanic Heritage Month enables the community to honor cultural roots while providing an opportunity for others to learn about Hispanic culture and traditions.

Students share favorite customs, celebrations and historical figures who have made meaningful contributions.

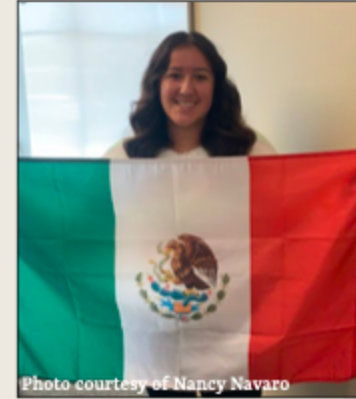


Photo courtesy of Nancy Navarro

1 MEXICO
"It is a very beautiful lively culture and the sense of community we have in Mexico is very strong."
— Natalia Suzet Esparza (12)



Photo courtesy of Nancy Navarro

2 HONDURAS
"On September 15, we celebrate independence day. We have parades in the streets, music and representations of the patriot heroes. There are also dancers called palilonas."
— Rossy Enamorado (12)



Photo courtesy of Nancy Navarro

3 GUATEMALA
"During Christmas, we have traditional foods like tamales and chuchitos. On our independence day, which is September 15, there are parades that students participate in."
— Dayani Sanchez (9)

4 COLOMBIA
"People perceive Colombia as a place that is very dangerous and violent, but those are stereotypes. Colombia has a lot of wonderful hardworking people who fight for our country."
— Jose Aldana (11)

5 PERU
"The same day as Halloween is Día de la Canción Criolla where we celebrate Lima's past. Peruvians really love their traditional food and music so we spend those days with family eating and listening to music."
— Yago Huayta (11)



Photo courtesy of Nancy Navarro



Photo by Amber Birrell

6 NICARAGUA
"Los Agúzotes is similar to Halloween but is celebrated in the second week of November. Many people dress up in costumes like demons and fictional characters. It is a way to make fun of everything bad and leave it behind, so you can have something good in your future."
— Nubynes Reyes (11)



Photo courtesy of Nancy Navarro



Baile folklórico is a traditional Mexican dance focusing on folk culture while integrating stylistic movements of ballet. The dance contrasts between large movements to show intense and delicate emotions that represent the ballet-inspired portion.

HISPANIC STUDENTS, STAFF CELEBRATE THEIR HERITAGE

By Amber Birrell and Annabelle Yip



Photo courtesy of Ariana Tejeda Moreno

CREATING CULTURAL CONNECTIONS: Senior Ariana Tejeda Moreno, third from right, connects with her culture through a traditional Mexican dance, folklórico.

Dancers parade through the streets in colorful dresses while music and families flood the surrounding areas — Hispanic countries are celebrating their independence day.

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Observation includes uniting Hispanic communities and sharing their individual cultures, senior Ariana Tejeda Moreno said. To Dean Maria Trejo, the month is a celebration of each country's fight for independence.

"It's the celebration of the desire to be able to be free and live a better life," Trejo said. "It's honoring that past, that fighting spirit."

The word "Hispanic" is defined as somebody from a Spanish-speaking country, however, there is often a lack of differentiation between countries since many assume all Hispanic people are Mexican, history teacher Nicholas Neese said. Similar to Neese, junior Nubynes Reyes said she has also faced these stereotypes.

"Every time I say I'm from Nicaragua, people ask if it's in Mexico," Reyes said. "No, it's not in Mexico, it's a country in the center of Central America that no one knows about, not even Hispanic people sometimes, it's sad."

Despite these misconceptions, Neese said he values holding onto cultural traditions as a way of connecting with his heritage. Since he did not grow up speaking Spanish, traditional dishes are one of the strongest ties he has to his background, he said.

"Traditions are about making sure that I am able to connect with those of the past," Neese said. "It feels nice knowing that I am continuing traditions and bringing traditions into my own life, but also adjusting them to what I think will benefit the next generation."

Additionally, Neese said his family has been an important part of helping him to stay connected to his culture. He holds family dinners close to his heart since the delicious foods are a big part of his culture.

Similar to Neese, Tejeda Moreno finds it important to connect to her culture and does so through dance. Specifically, Tejeda Moreno said she participates in Folklorico, a traditional Mexican dance.

"Participating in Folklorico is a

way I show my pride," Tejeda Moreno said. "It also allows me to be involved in a community of people with that same mentality. It's something that brings people together and makes everyone happy."

For those who are not of Hispanic heritage, Trejo said Hispanic Heritage Month is a great time to learn about the various independent cultures.

"It's important to not only our [Hispanic] students, but all students, to make them feel welcome by focusing on everybody's culture and giving them the attention or highlighting the beauty, culture of food and the celebrations," Trejo said.

Recognizing the merit of Hispanic people is important to senior Natalia Suzet Esparza because of the accomplishments her people have made, she said.

"We are here and we are working," Esparza said. "We want to study, have the same opportunities and break stereotypes. If we are acknowledged, we will rise above. We just need to be given the opportunity to shine."

HISTORICAL HISPANIC FIGURES

By Amber Birrell, Anderson Picone and Annabelle Yip

CESAR CHAVEZ (1927-1993)

In the 1950s and '60s, union leader Cesar Chavez advocated for farmers facing poor working and living conditions by leading marches and calling for a nationwide boycott. He founded the National Farm Workers Association, later called United Farm Workers, which aided laborers in earning higher wages and demanding improved working conditions.



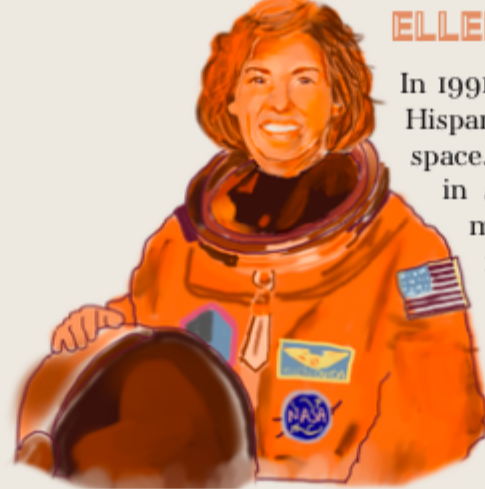
ROBERTO CLEMENTE (1934-1972)

Baseball Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente, the first Latin American baseball player to collect 3,000 hits, debuted for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1955, and led them to the World Series in 1971 despite the language barriers he faced. Throughout his career, he won 12 consecutive Gold Glove Awards for field excellence. Unfortunately he died in 1972 in a plane crash while delivering goods to Nicaragua.



ELLEN OCHOA (1958-)

In 1991, Ellen Ochoa became the first Hispanic female astronaut to go to space. Ochoa has spent over 950 hours in space over the course of four missions. In recognition of her research and specialized work as a flight engineer, Ochoa received the Distinguished Service Medal awarded by NASA for her exceptional service to the government. She also has six schools named after her.



SONIA SOTOMAYOR (1954-)

Sonia Sotomayor is the first Latina justice on the Supreme Court. She attended Princeton University and received the Pyne Prize, the highest academic honor a student at Princeton can receive. She went on to Yale Law School and was the editor for the Yale Law Journal. During her career, she has taught law at multiple universities and served on the board of trustees at Princeton University.



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Photo by Amber Birrell

WATCHING AZTEC DANCERS: Aztec dancers performed for students and staff. The dance is a way to worship gods and connect with Earth.

SHARING CULTURE ON CAMPUS

Past events:
Sept. 23: Aztec dance performance
Oct. 5: Los Padres potluck

Upcoming events:
Friday, Oct. 14: Social with Spanish music in the cafeteria