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Voices In Our Communities

■ DAY OF THE DEAD

## HONORING THE DEARLY DEPARTED

BY EMILY ESPARZA

**M**exico and much of Latin America is covered with marigolds to guide their dead home during the first two days of November. *Día de los Muertos* is a way for families to honor and remember those who have gone before. An amalgamation of pre-Hispanic and Catholic traditions, this celebration was inducted by UNESCO in 2008.

The holiday is a reminder that life is eternal, and the presence of loved ones is everlasting. An altar and *ofrendas* (offerings) are essential. Families decorate altars with photos of their deceased and put out their favorite food and drinks. Adorned with sugar skulls, *flores de cempasúchil*, and *papel picado*, altars are a vibrant and joyful celebration of life.

“People look at death as something negative,” said Assistant Professor Angelica Gonzalez.

Southwestern student Ariana Tapia said *Día de los Muertos* is the exact opposite.

“Death is real and even though our loved ones are no longer here, we can reconnect and remember them with happiness,” she said.

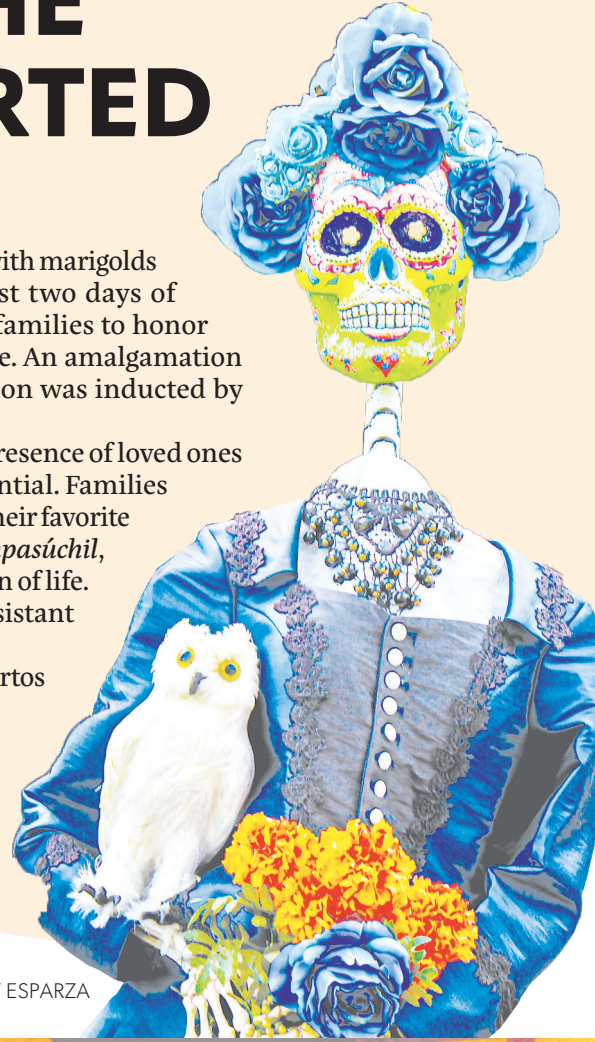


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**SKELETONS AT THE FEAST**—Altars and displays of colorful *Día de los Muertos* art blossomed in Old Town and cemeteries across the region.