

# ALDERPERSON JESSIE FUENTES WINS LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN 26TH WARD WITH 55.5% OF THE VOTE

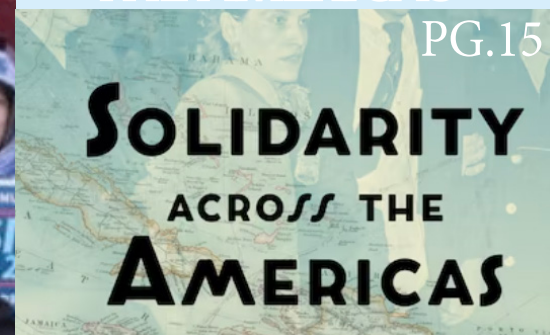


## PRCC'S VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING EXPANDS TO BOXING CLUB TRAINING AT-RISK YOUTH



PG. 10

## PRCC 50TH ANNIVERSARY LAUNCH WITH INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS OF "SOLIDARITY ACROSS THE AMERICAS"



## DÍA INTERNACIONAL DE LA MUJER "CONSTRUYENDO PUENTES"







### 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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## La Bodega del Barrio Colabora con Universidad Dominicana Demostración de la Preparación Comidas Saludables

By Armando Nava

Banco de Alimentos La Bodega del Barrio (una extensión de Vida/SIDA) con la colaboración de los restaurantes locales: Nellie's Restaurant, Janellie's Kitchen y Chucherrías Tropical Creations ayudaron a más de 20 familias con comidas navideñas al estilo familiar. La Bodega brindó asistencia alimentaria a más de 60 familias, desde participantes calificados hasta familias necesitadas y refugiados con asistencia alimentaria durante 2022. Además de los servicios de alimentación, brindamos educación nutricional y demostraciones

de cocina facilitadas por nuestro socio colaborador, la Universidad Dominicana. En nuestra última demostración de cocina, los participantes aprendieron de la nutrición y los beneficios de salud que brindan los gandules, así como también cómo cocinar gandules guisados con todos los ingredientes naturales. Las clases de Educación para la Salud/Nutrición ahora se llevarán a cabo el jueves en



El Mercado 2559 W Division a la 1:00 pm. Llame con anticipación para los horarios de clases. 773-342-0855. En conjunto con los servicios antes mencionados, también ofrecemos clases gratuitas de actividad física abiertas a toda la comunidad. Debe tener 18 años o más para inscribirse a la clase.

## Get to Know Trans Chicago Pillars Market

By Eve Stiles

Pillars was created by an inspiring Latinx, Transgender Individual who dedicates their life to community work for the Trans Community, their name is Jayla Xiana Padilla.

We created Pillars because we wanted to open a safe and affirming space where Black and Brown Trans/Non-Binary folks could sell their products and promote their businesses, as there aren't enough spaces to support



these artists and vendors. Being of Trans Experience can sometimes put us at a disadvantage when it comes to employment due to discriminatory realities. Creating and selling our own products is usually our only

form of income, which is why a safe space like Pillars for Trans vendors is vital. As Pillars continues to grow, our goal is to take it beyond our center and have Pillars become a pop-up event/Market where other businesses and establishments welcome Pillars in as a Trans community event. Anyone of Trans experience who sells any form of services/art/products is eligible to become a vendor at Pillars.



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

## CAAC 2023 Basketball Season Kicked off!

By Marvin García

The CAAC basketball season kicked off with teams from Yates, Stowe, Moos, Jose De Diego, Chase, Rowe, Barreto Boys and Girls Club, and West Park STEAM Academy! Boys and Girls middle school teams from two conferences enjoyed an amazing event that culminated in the 7th Annual Hooping for Humboldt Park Tournament on March 18, 2023, at Roberto Clemente Community Academy.

The CAAC Sports program is funded by The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, the Chicago Public Schools Family and Community Engagement, Laureus Sports Foundation, and a generous donation from the Dino Vulpitta family.



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**JUNE 20 - AUG 11**

In its Third Year

## NEIU Launches Three Dual Enrollment Programs in Humboldt Park

By Marvin García

January 2023, the Northeastern Illinois University Dual Enrollment program kicked off with 21 students representing three schools: Roberto Clemente Community Academy, Association House High School, and Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School. In total, 21 students are participating and taking two college courses at Roberto Clemente Community Academy.

The program also includes college advising once a week, a shadow day at the main campus, and free tuition. After the completion of the program, seniors are invited to enroll in the summer bridge program and apply for the NEIU

for You Scholarship that augments any financial aid to provide free tuition to students that enroll. The scholarship is good for all four years if students maintain a 2.5 GPA or higher. Northeastern's Center for College Access and Success anchors the initiative, which is supported by the President and is a signature program of the Board of Trustees.

This is the third year that dual enrollment has been offered to students attending Humboldt Park Schools. The program is looking to expand its reach by adding ChiArts H.S. next fall.

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# Classroom to Table Urban Agriculture Program Captures Community Interest

By Marvin García

Several schools in the Humboldt Park community have been participating in the Classroom to Table (C2T) healthy food program, funded by the Chicago Region Food System Fund. Classroom to Table is an eSTEAM program where students Pre-K through high school learn the fundamentals of urban agriculture to devise a healthy eating ecosystem of ultra-locally grown produce. This program serves to address current challenges faced here in our community such as food insecurity, food deserts, and food justice, which Program Director Tony Garritano says, “are a reality for a lot of our students.” Garritano aims to give students a real view of the situation they might



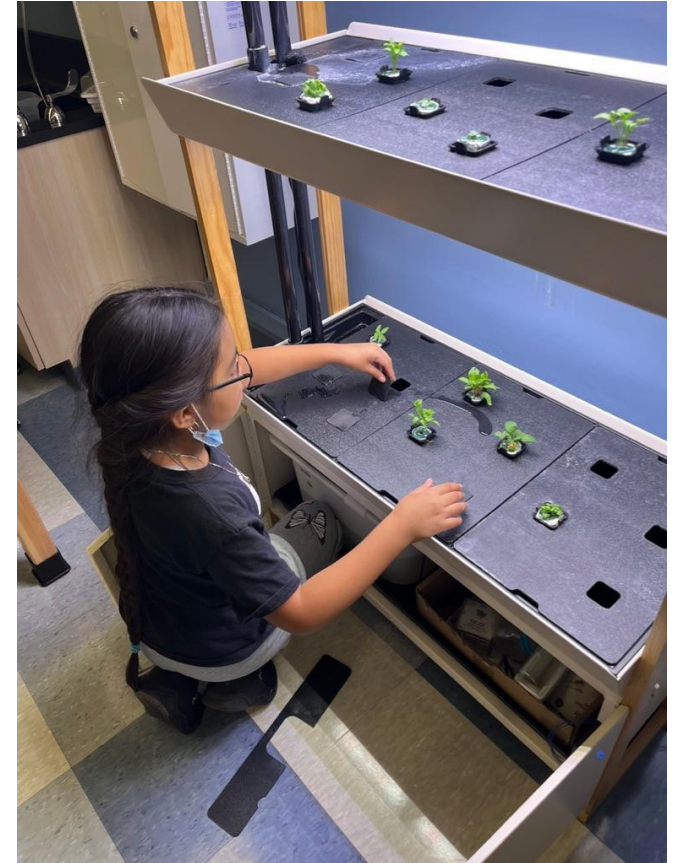
currently be living in, showcase that there is an alternative way to receive food and nutrients, and give students an understanding of the importance of growing food.

The student learning content areas for C2T include healthy eating, gardening, culinary arts, and entrepreneurship. This allows the program to capture different student interests while working toward the same goal of community sustainability through urban agriculture. For instance, students may be more interested in growing for recipe development, or for entrepreneurial opportunities. Currently at Roberto Clemente High School, three students are working to formalize a business model

where they grow plants and sell them to the community. “We wanted to make this program inclusive in different ways. C2T is the overarching entity but each school has its own spin on it,” Garritano explains.

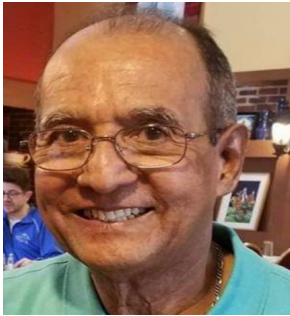
C2T provides education and materials to participating schools, including hydroponic gardening units. Eighty Pre-K students have a hydroponic garden on site at Centro Infantil Child Care where they grow herbs daily, and IO schools have on-site gardening and programming. The schools currently using hydroponic towers to grow local produce year-round include Chopin Elementary, Centro Infantil, Moos Elementary, Yates Elementary, West Park STEAM Academy, Roberto Clemente Community Academy, and Clemente’s Parent University. The PRCC and C2T will be supplying Pedro Albizu Campos High School with a hydroponic tower.

This program also includes monthly council meetings of staff and students to discuss gardening skills, meet business owners, discuss entrepreneurial



opportunities, curate healthy recipes from the locally grown produce, and discuss overall updates and best practices of the program. Roberto Clemente High School will act as a hub for the community council meetings, and is planning to develop urban agriculture as a new CPS career and technical education program. The PRCC envisions that access to this education and community support will foster the creation of student and staff-led farmers markets, food banks, and promote the creation of community-wide rooftop gardens as part of the Puerto Rico Town expansion that will provide access to healthy foods while developing a self-sustaining food ecosystem throughout the community.

# In Memoriam: Enrique Rivera Meléndez



By Marvin García

Enrique Rivera Meléndez, age 79, passed away January 24, 2023. Born in Guayama, Puerto Rico, Enrique moved to New York in 1963. He worked in radio stations

and other entertainment venues in New York, Chicago, and Ohio. In Chicago he worked at the San Juan Theater in the 1970s with Elias Díaz y Pérez and Raúl Cardona.

A Devoted father of Evelyn Rivera-Swint and Enrique Rivera-Rivera. A cherished grandfather of Zachary Swint and Christina Swint. Beloved son of the late Enrique Rivera and Natividad Meléndez;

dear brother of the late Antonia Torres; treasured uncle of Rosa Cordero and Esther Harris, and loving companion of Iris Migdalia Vázquez. Enrique enjoyed driving to Chicago to visit his daughter, grandchildren, and friends and watch baseball and basketball games. He worked at Western Enterprises in Avon Lake, Ohio.

## Félix Masud Piloto, un Cubano con Puerto Rico en su Corazón



Por Ángel Vázquez,  
actor y dramaturgo  
puertorriqueño

Cuando lo conoces, sabes de inmediato que es un cubano innato. Su decir, su distintiva guayabera y su aromático habano, te dejan saber

que es hijo orgulloso de la tierra de José Martí. Gentil, generoso, con un gran sentido del humor y don de gente. Una conversación con él abarca desde los temas más profundo a nivel mundial, hasta anécdotas sobre su padre, del mismo nombre, un popular masajista del beisbol y boxeo en La Habana. Una vez entras a su hogar te recibe junto a María, su amada esposa de toda la vida, y de paso con un buen café cortadito, comienza a compartir anécdotas coloridas desde Orestes Miñoso, Kid Chocolate, hasta el mismo Mario Moreno, Cantinflas.

Nos conocimos en la Universidad del Estado de la Florida. Yo era un chamaco. Él nueve años mayor que yo, realizaba su doctorado en historia. De inmediato surgió una camaradería que no discriminó por la diferencia de edad o la ausencia de mi conocimiento. Esta amistad fue creciendo con el tiempo y se convirtió en una hermandad.

Defensor de la Revolución Cubana, se convirtió en mi mentor y no pasó mucho tiempo cuando juntos participamos en mi primera manifestación contra la pena de muerte. Eran los tiempos de las revoluciones en Nicaragua y en El Salvador. Para ampliar nuestro conocimiento, él como director de Centro para la Participación

Educativa de la Universidad arriba mencionada, trajo varios invitados de dichos países para ofrecer conferencias. “Oye, vamos a oír a Silvio, a Pablo” y con la imagen de Sandino en el fondo, también compartía El Padre Antonio de Rubén Blades. Otro era cantar con sus libros. “Los libros no se prestan, consorte”, decía. Pero, los prestaba. Sucedió con Las Venas Abiertas. Y como buen profesor, después me sometería a sus amigables “interrogatorios” sobre estos temas.

Participamos en el equipo de softbol universitario Latinos Unidos. En vez tuvimos que interrumpir un juego porque llegó su invitado, nada más y nada menos que del gran patriota nacionalista Rafael Cancel Miranda. Félix siempre ha estado conectado con Puerto Rico. Siempre sabe de nuestra historia pasada y presente. Y es solidario con nuestra lucha por la independencia. ¿Cómo no quererlo?

Una vez graduado, se distinguió como profesor emérito de la Universidad de DePaul en Chicago. Allí dirigió el Centro de Investigaciones Latinas y todos los años organizó viajes estudiantiles a Cuba, entre muchas cosas más. Félix siempre ha mantenido en su corazón el amor por su patria y la mía. Muchos años después se nos dio un gran sueño, visitar juntos a Cuba, donde por supuesto, fue nuestro incansable guía. Él siempre ha cultivado la amistad.

Felix Masud Piloto falleció víctima de cáncer el pasado viernes, 10 de marzo a las 12:44 de la madrugada. La noticia nos causa un dolor enorme a mi esposa y a mí. Escribo en tiempo presente, porque seres tan especiales como Felito nunca mueren. Y de todas maneras, su perenne sonrisa

siempre perteneció al cielo. ¡Hasta la vitoria siempre, bárbaro! (Esto es adicional. Sé que hay límite de espacio. Pero, se los envío por si acaso)

DATOS SOBRE EL DOCTOR FELIZ MASUD PILOTO

Desde finales del siglo pasado hasta las primeras décadas de la actual centuria, promovió el intercambio académico entre Estados Unidos y Cuba, consciente de que con ello nadaba contracorriente de la política hostil que los gobiernos de su país de residencia han aplicado para asfixiar a un pueblo del que jamás se alienó. Dos años atrás respaldó la resolución del Ayuntamiento de Chicago, aprobada por 50 concejales, que reclamó al Gobierno federal el fin del bloqueo a Cuba. Al hacerlo significó cómo «el bloqueo ha causado graves daños al pueblo cubano» y ha impedido «el normal desarrollo de las relaciones culturales entre Estados Unidos y Cuba».

El 3 de diciembre de 2020, Félix suscribió, junto a otros profesores de prestigiosas universidades estadounidenses, una petición para nominar al Premio Nobel de la Paz al contingente médico cubano Henry Reeve, especializado en la atención ante desastres naturales y graves epidemias, por su extraordinaria labor humanitaria. Entre sus obras ensayísticas más significativas se hallan Con los brazos abiertos (1988); De exiliados bienvenidos a inmigrantes ilegales: la migración cubana a Estados Unidos 1959-1995 (1996); Cuba: colonizadores, esclavos, exiliados y refugiados en la historia cubana (1998); y Mariel 1980: consecuencias de una política migratoria politizada (2005).

En su patria fue condecorado con la Distinción por la Cultura Nacional.

# #Centerfold

# #Centerfold



## Centro Cultural Participa en Cuba La V Conferencia Internacional del Equilibrio del Mundo con Todos y para el Bien de Todos - Diálogo de Civilizaciones



Por Clarisa López

“No nos maltraten, y no se les maltratará. Respeten, y se les respetará. Al acero responde el acero, y la amistad a la amistad. En el pecho antillano no hay odio” - José Martí

La V Conferencia Internacional se celebró del 24 al 28 de enero de 2023 en el Palacio de las Convenciones, La Habana, Cuba. La Conferencia coincide con la celebración de los 170 años de José Martí. A la misma asistió una delegación de Puerto Rico compuesta por puertorriqueñas y puertorriqueños radicados en la Isla y en la Diáspora. Respondiendo a un llamado a todas personas de buena voluntad, a los intelectuales, artistas, políticos y activistas; a educadores, escritores, periodistas, luchadores sociales, dirigentes políticos, sindicales y religiosos, a miembros de organizaciones no gubernamentales, científicas, feministas, juveniles, ecologistas, personas movidas por principios de justicia y equidad. Más de 1,100 delegados representativos de más de 80 países se dieron cita en este mega evento que rebasó todas las expectativas del mismo. El Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño Juan

Antonio Corretjer fue invitado y representado por uno de sus fundadores, Oscar López Rivera y la Directora Asociada de Servicios Humanos, Clarisa López Ramos. Aprovechando el marco de esta conferencia ambos estuvieron distribuyendo el libro de la edición de aniversario núm. 50 del Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño entre los asistentes. De las manos de uno de los fundadores le fue entregado el libro al héroe de la República de Cuba y Presidente del Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP) Fernando González Llort. El objetivo principal de este foro de pensamiento plural y

multidisciplinario desarrollado en un escenario donde se contribuya a sensibilizar la opinión pública mundial para crear una conciencia contra los males que hoy aquejan a la humanidad y ponen en riesgo la propia existencia de nuestra especie.

Por medio de conferencias magistrales, intervenciones especiales, comisiones, paneles, talleres, un espacio juvenil y otras modalidades de reflexión se abordaron temáticas variadas, como corresponde a un foro plural y multidisciplinario de esta naturaleza y magnitud. Como es habitual, el evento desarrolló una abarcadora agenda en la cual incluyeron algunos de los siguientes temas: COVID-19, diversidad y diálogo cultural,

movimientos sociales, solidaridad, ecosistema, identidad nacional, caso colonial de Puerto Rico, derechos humanos, redes sociales, multi liberalismo, paz, educación y derechos humanos, construcción de una democracia participativa, entre otros.

El día 27 de enero de 2023 fuimos parte de la Comisión de Solidaridad y Paz con la intervención especial de Oscar López Rivera, activista puertorriqueño y uno de los fundadores del Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño junto a Fernando González Llort, presidente del ICAP. Ambos ejemplos de resistencia para el movimiento de solidaridad mundial. Los cuales hablaron a los asistentes sobre la importancia y el valor de la solidaridad y la paz.

En la clausura del evento, Gail Walker, Directora Ejecutiva de IFCO Pastores por la Paz se dirigió a los asistentes a la conferencia



exhortándoles a ser mensajeros de la paz, solidaridad, y al cese del bloqueo injusto e inhumano de EE.UU. contra Cuba.



## HITN Presente en el Festival de los Reyes Magos de Vieques

By Luis Alejandro Molina

El pasado 7 de enero se llevó a cabo la vigesimocuarta edición del Festival de los Reyes Magos en la isla de Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Tras una pausa de dos años, el festival volvió a celebrarse de modo presencial en el Parque de Esperanza. Decenas de niños y niñas disfrutaron de talleres educativos, música, cuentos y juegos. Los menores recibieron con entusiasmo la llegada de los Reyes Magos al parque, pues arribaron al lugar en un simbólico desfile sobre caballitos de palo.

El festival contó con la presencia de un cuarto Rey Mago, el activista: Oscar López Rivera, quien también es el autor del plato conmemorativo de este año. La ceremonia oficial fue dirigida por la maestra viequense, Adelmari Lassús, e incluyó emotivos mensajes de los Reyes que felicitaron a los niños y sus padres.

Este evento fue dedicado al Payaso Juglar y La Madrinita. Y también se resaltó el compromiso y dedicación de Francisco Rivera y Grisela Barreto quienes por más de 15 años viajan desde Utuado para llegar a Vieques y agasajar a los menores. Tras la ceremonia, los niños y niñas recibieron como regalos juguetes no-bélicos y libros.

La celebración fue posible



gracias a la labor y dedicación del voluntariado de la isla Nena y de la Isla Grande. Al igual que a sus múltiples colaboradores, entre ellos: Mike Nieves y Luis Alejandro Molina, de HITN.

Y para el próximo año, el Festival de los Reyes Magos en Vieques ya ha comenzado con las preparaciones del 25o aniversario... ¡Un cuarto de milenio de alegría y tradición!



## Mpowerment Groups for HIV Prevention Started in February

By Edgar Rossi

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center's (PRCC) Public Health Initiatives (PHI) will restart the Mpowerment groups. Facilitated by Testing Counselor Edgar Rossi, the groups will focus on group interventions and helping individuals living with or without HIV gain access to prevention and management services. The Mpowerment program is designed to disrupt the spread of HIV to gay, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual men at high risk of getting HIV. Effective intervention programs are needed in our community. This program will offer a safe space where we can all debunk misconceptions about HIV. We will learn to negotiate safer sex

and how to enjoy it even more. We will learn to use condoms effectively, tackle interpersonal issues that interfere with HIV interventions, get tested and fearlessly learn our HIV status. We will teach each other how to support our friends in the process of safer sex, consider Prep, and adhere to medication treatment.

If you or someone you know fits in one or more of the categories above and are interested in participating in Empowerment intervention groups, please contact Edgar Rossi at 773-342-0855, edgarr@prcc-chgo.org. Empowerment groups start in February 2023.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."



**The Mpowerment groups are peer support groups and will be based on Empowering people educating them about this HIV epidemic and who is more vulnerable to get HIV, poor sexual communication skills and literature of HIV risk reduction specially men who have sex with men.**



# Friendship Starts with a Fight, Blossoms into a Boxing Club

## Training At-Risk Youth

*The Puerto Rican Cultural Center expanded its reach and capabilities in 2022, when Director of Policy and Youth Advocacy Jessie Fuentes led the charge to create the Department of Violence Prevention and Intervention. Operating with the mission of serving residents of Humboldt Park who have been affected by community violence, the VPI Department employs more than 20 employees including case managers, outreach workers, Chicago Public School site mentors, and victim advocates. Through Jessie's leadership, funding and staffing have been secured for four separate violence prevention programs, and have expanded its reach to the adjacent neighborhoods of Logan Square, Hermosa, and Belmont-Cragin. In 2023, VPI will establish its fifth program: Coordinated Reentry and Reintegration. The goal of this most recent addition to the VPI department will serve members of the Humboldt Park community who are returning home from incarceration. Although Director Jessie Fuentes has stepped away to assume her new role as 26th Ward Alderperson, VPI personnel continue to operate and serve the communities of the West and Northwest sides through outreach and community partnerships, some of which have already been established with Chicago Public Schools, Cook County Juvenile Probation, and local businesses such as the Barracks Boxing Club, which has been generous enough to open its doors and provide boxing coaching and mentorship to the youth of our community and participants of the Department of VPI. More on that partnership and the work done by the Barracks and VPI employees can be read here in the recent reporting done by the Chicago Sun Times.*

*By Michael Loria from Chicago-Suntimes*  
David Ortiz and Antonio Beniquez's friendship

began 25 years ago with a brief tussle in their high school gym class.

They were on the Lakeview High School basketball court when someone said Ortiz, a freshman, was a wrestler. Beniquez, a sophomore, decided to see if it was true, and put Ortiz in a headlock until a teacher blew the whistle for them to stop.

"After that, I put my hand out, said 'I'm Antonio.' He said, 'I'm David,' and we've been



friends ever since," Beniquez said.

Now, decades later, they're teaching the lessons fighting can impart at their own boxing club with free training for at-risk youth.

"The vision for the gym is to be able to serve the community we're in and the neighborhoods we grew up in," said Beniquez, 39.

They opened the Barracks Boxing Club in Logan Square, near Armitage and Springfield avenues, in 2021. That Northwest Side spot puts them between Irving Park, where Ortiz grew up, and Humboldt Park, where Beniquez is from.

"We really wanted to create a home base where we know the people and their struggles, and give them an opportunity we didn't have," Beniquez said.

Beniquez, an artist known for his murals, designed the space and helps fund it with Ortiz, who is lead trainer and handles day-to-day operations.

The gym has about 80 members. The youngest is 7; the oldest, about 50. Memberships cost up to \$135, but donors have recently helped cover that cost for some new members.

### Round one

Fighting might seem like an unlikely way to help young people, but Beniquez and Ortiz say it opens doors and teaches life lessons.

It's also what first brought the two friends together in high school, nearly 25 years ago, and since then they have since supported each other through school, family and business ventures.

After seeing how Ortiz coached his son, Jeremy, to becoming a nationally ranked boxer, Beniquez decided to join Ortiz and help open the gym.

Ortiz grew up wrestling, like his dad and uncle, but threw himself into boxing after his son took to the sport.

Initially, he brought his son to train at a gym in West Town and then eventually the Chicago Youth Boxing Club in Little Village.

At the time, the gym was run by Rev. Victor Rodriguez, who besides helping to coach prize-winning fighters, offered free training as a way to keep kids off the street by doing something positive. Rev. Rodriguez died in 2019.

"That's where my inspiration came from, learning under him and working alongside him," said Ortiz, 38.

(Continue on page 11)



(Continued from page 10)

### A fighter enters the ring

Like Rodríguez, Ortiz and Beniquez wanted to offer free training, but needed outside help to do so. At first, they only could offer some discounts, such as for families, first responders, veterans and teachers.

Through Beniquez, a mentor at Kerry Wood's Pitch In foundation, they were able to bring in students from the West Side schools the foundation supports, but Ortiz also wanted to reach out to the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, known for its violence prevention efforts.

So it was a stroke of luck when Jordan Gearey, a case manager with one of the center's violence prevention programs, walked into the gym.

Gearey, 27, works with youth ages 14 to 24, in the Belmont Cragin, Hermosa and Logan Square neighborhoods. He also likes to box.

He joined the gym around the same time he joined the center and when Ortiz pitched his idea, he recognized the potential benefits.

The center now provides membership funds for about 41 at-risk youth for up to two years with an option to extend the program and add participants.

"There's nothing more humbling than

getting in a boxing ring," Gearey said. "If you do three, three-minute rounds, or just 9 minutes, what you're going to take away is discipline and respect for the person that's across from you."

Plus, it offered a new way to reach kids that might find other forms of mentorship unappealing.

"A lot of kids involved in street life or gang affiliation don't have a huge interest in case management, because – as toxic as it is – they already have a support structure in their lives," he said.

### A clean fight

Christian Colunga isn't new to boxing, but because of the cultural center's program, he's been able to train regularly and hopes to have his first professional bout soon.



The sport, he said, changed his life. "It gave me confidence, taught me about myself. It made me a peaceful person," said Colunga, 24.

Colunga grew up in Franklin Park got into the sport around five years ago, after his dad pushed him into the sport to lose weight.

It came into his life at just the right time, too, he said, as there wasn't much supervision at home. His dad, a single father with seven kids, was often gone for work.

"When you don't have someone telling you how to behave, it's easy to get caught up in stuff that can get you in trouble," he said.

After dropping from 160 to 135 pounds, Colunga stuck with the sport for its other benefits, from the community at the gym to the potential to earn a living doing it.

But above all, it helps maintain his equilibrium – and avoid confrontation.

"I have a lot of guilt about getting physical now," he said. "I ask myself if it's worth it, and 99% of the time, it isn't."

**FOR THE  
45TH PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE'S DAY PARADE  
SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2023  
AT 2:00PM  
ON PASEO BORICUA  
CELEBRATING THE  
50<sup>th</sup>  
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OF THE PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER  
JUAN ANTONIO CORRETJER**

**Save THE DATE**

For additional information call or email; 773-342-0855, [Prpeoplesparade@prcc-chgo.org](mailto:Prpeoplesparade@prcc-chgo.org)



# Se Celebra Día Internacional de la Mujer en PRCC

## Construyendo Puentes Desde Puerto Rico a Chicago desde Chicago a Puerto Rico



Por Clarisa López

El pasado 8 de marzo alrededor de unas 65 personas nos dimos cita para conmemorar el Día Internacional de las Mujeres bajo el lema “Construyendo Puentes desde Puerto Rico a Chicago desde Chicago a Puerto Rico.” En un panel virtual realizado en WEPA El Mercado del Pueblo desde Puerto Rico nos acompañaron: la Directora Ejecutiva, la Lcda. Amarilis Pagán Jiménez de Proyecto Matria, Elsie de Jesús, representante de la Organización Puertorriqueña de la Mujer Trabajadora (OPMT) y Jessica Fuentes Catalá, Directora Ejecutiva de la Red Nacional de Albergues de Violencia de Género.

Comenzamos el panel con la Directora Ejecutiva de Proyecto Matria, quien nos habló sobre la fundación, visión, programas, objetivos y compromiso de Matria. Proyecto Matria es una organización comunitaria sin fines de lucro que opera una red de servicios a las mujeres a través de todo Puerto Rico. El innovador enfoque de Proyecto Matria trasciende la visión asistencialista de la mujer como víctima, y le ofrece servicios comprometidos con sus necesidades, su desarrollo humano pleno, y el desarrollo de capacidad propia y permanente

para su autosuficiencia e independencia económica, para que valide su papel como recurso productivo medular para el desarrollo económico y social de Puerto Rico.

Los servicios de Proyecto Matria están enfocados en el desarrollo integral al apoderamiento, la capacitación, la estabilización emocional, la articulación de metas a corto y a largo plazo, y el acceso coordinado a servicios de apoyo (salud, legal, etc.) de la mujer basado en un análisis de 360° de sus necesidades particulares. Entre

sus programas Proyecto Matria cuenta con: GAIA, Arepa Chic, Programa de Derecho Pro Bono, Línea de Ayuda 24/7 Estamos Contigo, Mesa Social, Casa Solidaria, entre otros. Sus oficinas están localizadas en Caguas, Puerto Rico. Para hacer cualquier contribución o contactarlas pueden llamar al (787) 704-2222 o escribirles: [www.proyecto matria.org](http://www.proyecto matria.org)

Nuestra segunda panelista fue la Directora Ejecutiva de la Red Nacional de Albergues de Violencia de Género, Jessica Fuentes Catalá nos habló sobre la fundación de la Red. Entre los Albergues Integrantes de la Red se encuentran: Hogar Ruth Inc., Casa Protegida Julia de Burgos, La Casa de Todos, CAPRO Muni I, CAPRO Muni II, Hogar La Piedad, Casa de la Bondad, Hogar Nueva Mujer Santa María de la Merced, Inc. A través de los Albergues Integrantes y sus programas los/as participantes reciben una gama de servicios en favor de su bienestar.

Para contactarlos para procesos administrativos, coordinaciones o donaciones a la Red Nacional de Albergues de Violencia de Género los puedes llamar o enviar un mensaje al (787)

320-7101 o escribirles por correo electrónico a: [coordinaciondealberguespr@gmail.com](mailto:coordinaciondealberguespr@gmail.com)

Nuestra tercera panelista fue la compañera Elsie de Jesús, representante de la Organización Puertorriqueña de la Mujer Trabajadora (OPMT). De Jesús ha realizado un trabajo investigativo extenso relacionado con la oposición a LUMA y el impacto de la privatización del servicio de energía eléctrica sobre las mujeres en Puerto Rico. Nos habló del comienzo de la OPMT en 1982 y de cómo se ha nutrido del trabajo en alianzas con diferentes organizaciones en Puerto Rico. De Jesús profundizó en el tema de la privatización de la generación eléctrica y el plan de ajuste de la deuda de la Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE).

Aprovechando la coyuntura de la conmemoración resaltamos los 50 años de haber fundado el Centro Cultural Juan Antonio Corretjer, la elección de la primera mujer Concejal del Distrito 26, Jessie Fuentes, y el reconocimiento a varias de nuestras compañeras de trabajo tales como: Samantha Toledo, El Rescate; Angie Cruz, Humboldt Park Youth Employment & Empowerment Program; Mayra Colón, Area 787; Lisa Cruz, Lisa Isadora Cruz Trans Chicago Empowerment Center; Leony Calderón, La Bodega del Barrio, Muévete, Coordinadora del desfile del pueblo Puertorriqueño; Glenda Guzmán, Safe Passage y Nérida Morales, Welcoming Center. Añadimos un reconocimiento muy especial a Natasha Brown Castro, Directora de Servicios Humanos e Iniciativas de Vivienda. Actualmente, está culminando su Maestría en Planificación Urbana de la Universidad de Illinois en Chicago.

En el Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño Juan Antonio Corretjer nos sentimos muy orgullosos y honrados de contar con su visión y experiencia en todo el trabajo que diariamente ella realiza, Natasha hace la diferencia en cada una de los empleados(as) y participantes que estamos en sus programas.

(Continúa a la página 14)



## Chicago Welcomes Ambassador from Cuba

By La Voz Staff

On Thursday March 23rd, The Puerto Rican Cultural Center's Executive Director, José E. López was invited to speak at a Solidarity and Cultural Event welcoming the Ambassador, Chargé d'Affaires Embassy of Cuba in the United States; Lianys Torres Rivera. The event was held at the Segundo

Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center and hosted by the Chicago Cuba Coalition. From 2015 to 2017 Lianys Torres Rivera was part of the Cuban delegation that met with the US Government authorities to discuss the re-establishment of diplomatic relations and the re-opening of embassies in both countries. She was also part of the Cuba-US Bilateral Commission, the

Cuba-US Bilateral Economic Dialogue as well as other Cuba-US bilateral dialogues on regulatory issues, human rights, traffic in persons, the establishment of direct postal services, renewable energy and banking issues. It was a very special show of solidarity to share space with Lianys Torres Rivera and discuss how best to support the Cuban people.



## Jessie Fuentes Wins Landslide Victory in 26th Ward With 55.5% of the Vote Against Three Opponents

### A True People's Victory Building on a Legacy of Four Decades of Rooted Aldermanic Leadership



By La Voz Staff

Jessie Fuentes will be sworn in as the Alderperson of the 26th Ward on May 15, 2023; after officially garnering 55.5% of the vote- a landslide victory against a coordinated campaign

concerned about a new edition to The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture (which is being constructed to house our collective memory); the lumpen elements in this area (who will sell their souls to the highest bidder and who know that their

by 3 opponents: Angie González-Rodríguez, Julian "Jumpin" Pérez, and Kirk Ortiz. Jessie, and our people prevailed over a joint campaign by three candidates backed by all of the enemies of our community: the gentrifiers who wanted the return of Riot Fest with all of its destructive environmental impact in Humboldt Park; the so called "preservationists" who never challenge the terrible mess that event left in our community, and who are more deeply

days of drug dealing and violence will end with a practice that empowers our youth); and more so by the organized, right-wing, racist, pseudogang- The Fraternal Order of Police. This last one has spent thousands of dollars on a mailer impugning the reputation of our homegrown community activist- Jessie Fuentes. All these elements combined could not confront the people's campaign which Jessie Fuentes organized. Our working families, our white allies, our elders, our youth, our African-American brothers and sisters, and all those who truly believe in social justice, who see gentrification as a process of spatial deconcentration to dismantle our Puerto Rican community came together as ripples of energy in a mighty current, which created the "Jumping" effect that drove our enemies and Julian back to his dark suburban abode. Jessie's election will ensure that after four decades the practice which informed the process of the political & economic empowerment of this community carried out by her predecessors- Luis Guttierrez, Billy Ocasio, and Roberto Maldonado will continue, and will take on new dimensions as we build a strong foundation for a beloved community of hope and change.

# Exclusive Interview with State Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas

## Dispelling the False Narratives About the Safe T Act



By La Voz Staff

**Q:** Can you share with us your thoughts on the SAFE-T Act and what inspired proponents of the act to fight for the reforms?

**A:** I support the reforms in the SAFE-T Act because they will help make our communities safer and restore a measure of justice to the criminal legal system. While the SAFE-T Act has many components, including more funding for officer training and resources, the media has focused mainly on the end of money bond, colloquially known as “cash bail.”

Ending money bond is a huge victory for our people-based movement. There are people losing their jobs, their housing, and even custody of their children while awaiting trial in jail all because they can't afford to pay their bond. Meanwhile, someone charged with the same offense who can pay is free to walk out. Money should not determine a person's freedom, period.

The SAFE-T Act makes sure that judges look at all the evidence in a case and weigh whether or not a person meets the criteria to be jailed pretrial, which revolves around whether they pose a danger to the community, themselves, or are a flight risk.

The constitution says that we are innocent until proven guilty. The money bond system flies in the face of that fundamental right, and I'm proud to have been a part of eliminating it in Illinois.

**Q:** What are your thoughts on the

misinformation that has been propagated by some politicians and government officials about the SAFE-T Act?

**A:** Conservative, Trump-supporting billionaires poured money into a misinformation campaign aimed at scaring voters in November about the end of money bond, and they failed. There was another Blue Wave in Illinois because voters aren't as easily manipulated as these billionaires thought. Now our job is to continue to educate residents about the end of money bond and how that will reform the criminal legal system and impact people charged with crimes.

**Q:** Can you speak to your constituents about how the SAFE-T Act could affect them, if at all? (particularly because there has been fear-mongering about this act)

**A:** The SAFE-T Act is designed to provide both longterm and shortterm solutions to safety and justice issues in Illinois. We earmarked a lot of funding to a variety of organizations to get at the root causes of crime, but those solutions take time. The end of money bond will be the most immediate change for residents. Once it's implemented—possibly over the summer due to a pending court case—no one will have the option to buy their way out of jail. Some people will be detained based on their charges, but most lesser offenses will be released pretrial. This will keep people in their jobs, in their homes, and keep wealth within our communities, instead of being forfeited to the courts. People charged with crimes will still be obligated to attend their court dates and receive their sentences, but many more people will be free pretrial.

**Q:** There have recently been amendments to the SAFE-T Act, can you share your thoughts on those amendments and what it means for your constituents?

**A:** The amendments to the SAFE-T Act were 1) technical changes that we always intended to make before implementation and 2) Necessary clarifications to make after conservative billionaires

twisted language in the original act. It was important to make the intent of the act crystal clear to combat their misinformation.

These amendments were the result of a year-long working group of legislators, law enforcement officers, and advocates. I was supportive of these amendments because they were reached thoughtfully and over time by a diverse set of stakeholders.

(Continua de la página 12)

Destacamos a dos mujeres puertorriqueñas emprendedoras que comenzaron sus sueños en la incubadora de negocios localizada en WEPA El Mercado del Pueblo y ahora cuentan con sus propios negocios actualmente localizados en el corazón del Paseo Boricua en Humboldt Park. La primera fue Janellie Rodríguez quien nos habló sobre la creación de su restaurante Janellie's Kitchen. Ella comparte su pasión por la cocina puertorriqueña junto a su esposo, Moisés. La segunda presentación fue Sachayra Cintrón, propietaria y Pastry Chef de Chucherías Tropical Creation, ésta nos habló sobre el papel de las mujeres en su familia y la influencia de éstas sobre la creación de su negocio. Resaltando en su mensaje a su madre, Mayra Colón, Chef y Propietaria de Área 787.

Gracias a todas las compañeras que se dieron cita, en especial Humboldt Park Youth Employment & Empowerment Program (HPYEPP) por la organización, diseño, creatividad, compromiso y disponibilidad para hacer de esta actividad una exitosa. Todas las empleadas de HPYEPP estuvieron portando un pañuelo color verde en sus brazos para unirse en favor del aborto legal y seguro. La actividad fue caracterizada por los colores verdes y violetas como símbolo de la continuidad y compromiso para continuar la lucha junto a otras mujeres a contribuir con nuestro granito de arena para lograr un mundo cada vez más democrático, justo, libre, inclusivo, diverso, con justicia y desarrollo para todas y todos.



# PRCC Initiates International 50th Anniversary Celebration with the presentation of Dr. Margaret Power's Book "Solidarity across the Americas": Chicago, Berkeley, Davis, San Francisco, Puerto Rico, France, and England Celebration

By La Voz Staff

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Juan A Corretjer (PRCC), is honored to announce the launching of its 50th-anniversary celebration with the presentation of Dr. Margaret Power's book, "Solidarity across the Americas: The Puerto Rican Nationalist Party and Anti-Imperialism" (University of North Carolina Press, 2023) in Chicago, San Francisco, Berkeley, Davis, Puerto Rico, France, and England. Dr. Power is the Chair of the PRCC's Board of Directors and a Professor Emerita of History at the Illinois Institute of Technology. This book is an excellently researched, well-written, incisive, and insightful historical narrative of building a broad movement of active networks in virtually all of Latin America, much of the Caribbean, and in New York City for Puerto Rican Independence.

It is not a coincidence that we, in the PRCC, received a physical copy of this book on March 1, 2023, exactly 69 years after the photo which appears on the book's cover was taken, for it was the guiding principles of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party- the self-determination, self-actualization, and self-reliance of the Puerto Rican people- which have served as the decolonizing practice of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center since its inception 50 years ago. Thus, while the PRCC's work is deeply rooted in centering our marginalized Puerto Rican community in Chicago, we have played a decisive role in every major struggle in Puerto Rico during those five decades, including but not limited to the following: Stopping the proposed copper mining in Puerto Rico; getting the US Navy out of Vieques; halting the construction of the gasoducto; also supporting the "Rescate" movement on the island by the homeless and the dispossessed and exposing the political repression against the independence movement and demanding freedom for all political prisoners, as well as the movement against the death penalty on the island. Most recently, the

PRCC played a significant role in developing the 3R's (Rescue, Relief, and Rebuild) for Puerto Rico campaign following the natural catastrophic Maria, Fiona, and the earthquakes.

It is against the above backdrop of the PRCC's role in building a community of resistance in Chicago and its engagement in solidarity with Puerto Rico that we initiate our Golden Anniversary by presenting this scholarly work in the following places:

April 6, Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, Chicago  
5:30 - 7:00, 3015 W. Division St., Chicago, IL 60622  
Presenters: José E. López, Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Maura Toro-Morn, Vice President Elect of the Puerto Rican Studies Association and Professor of Sociology, Illinois State University, and Dr. Margaret Power.

#### CALIFORNIA:

SAN FRANCISCO: April 12, University of California, Davis, Noon, Presenter: Lisa Materson, Professor of History

April 16, Medicine for Nightmares bookstore in SF, 3046 24th St, San Francisco, 3:00 pm Presenter: Judith Mirkinson

BERKELEY: April 17, Latinx Resource Center, UC Berkeley, Noon  
Presenter: Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz, Professor of Sociology

#### PUERTO RICO:

Ponce: May 3, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 7 p.m. Presenters: César A. Hernández Colón and Enrique Ayoroa Santaliz

Río Piedras: May 4, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, Museo de

Antropología y Historia, 3:00 pm, Presenter: José Manuel Davila, historian and filmmaker

May 4, Ateneo, San Juan, Puerto Rico 7:00 pm, Presenters: Marco Rigau and Che Paralitici

May 6, Festival de Claridad, Venta y firma del Libro

#### PARIS:

June 5, Ecole de Hautes Etudes, Presenter: Yann Philippe

June 8 Université Paris 3, 5-7 p.m. Presenter: Edward Blumenthal

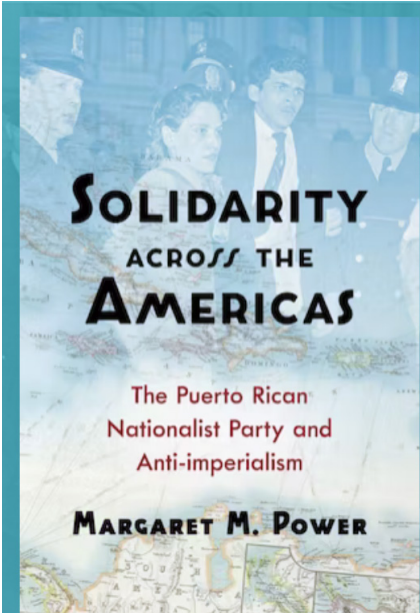
#### LONDON:

June 12, University of London, Institute of the Americas, 3 p.m., Presenter: William Booth

#### OXFORD:

June 15, Latin American Centre, Oxford, 5-7 p.m., Presenter: Eduardo Posada-Carbo.

These events are made possible with the support of the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)



**BOOK PRESENTATION & SIGNING:**

APRIL 6, 2023 • 5:30 - 7:00PM  
MUSEUM OF  
PUERTO RICAN ARTS  
AND CULTURE  
3015 W. DIVISION ST.,  
CHICAGO 60622

**PRESENTERS:**

JOSÉ E. LÓPEZ  
PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER

DR. MAURA TORO-MORN  
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

DR. MARGARET POWER  
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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A LIGHT DINNER WILL BE SERVED.  
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BY APRIL 4TH.





# FAMILY ART WORKSHOP

**SAT. APRIL 22, 2023  
11 AM - 1PM  
\$10 PER PERSON**

The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture  
3015 W. Division Street | Chicago, IL

**25 SPOTS AVAILABLE  
(ALL AGES)**

For more info. email: [info@nmprac.org](mailto:info@nmprac.org)



THE NATIONAL PUERTO RICAN MUSEUM

# Soy BORICUA

EXHIBIT OPENS:  
FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2023  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PUERTO RICAN ARTS AND CULTURE

## Featuring Boricua Artists

ELIMAGDY AMARO	MICHELLE GOMEZ
SANDRA ANTONGIORGI	SAM KIRK
JANICE APONTE	ERICA PEREZ
REBEL BETTY	PATRICIA PEREZ
MIGDALIA GALARZA	LORIMAR MATOS
MELISSA GOMEZ	NOHEMI MORAN



# Semillas

**ARTIST TALK WITH  
RAUL ORTIZ BONILLA**

*Presented by*



**Saturday, April 15, 2023**  
**10:30 AM Español (Spanish)**  
**12:30 PM English (Inglés)**

National Museum of Puerto Rican  
Arts and Culture  
3015 W. Division (2nd Floor Gallery)