



AT THE HISTORIC PUERTO RICAN HEALTH SUMMIT: COMMUNITY AND SCHOLARS GRAPPLE WITH PUERTO RICAN HEALTH CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES



**BOTÁNICA VICTORIA
UNA JOYA ESPIRITUAL Y
COMERCIAL**

P. 6 & 7



**EL 50 FESTIVAL DE CLARIDAD
HONRA LA LUCHA
BORICUA EN CHICAGO**

P. 8



**OSSAMENTA: HERMINIO
RODRÍGUEZ FIRST
USA SOLO EXHIBITION**

P. 4



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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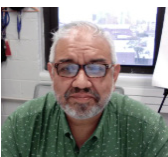
MEET OUR PRODUCTION TEAM



Roberto Sanabria
COPY EDITOR
robertos@prcc-chgo.org



Xiomara Rodríguez
EDITOR IN CHIEF
xiomara.rodriguez@prcc-chgo.org



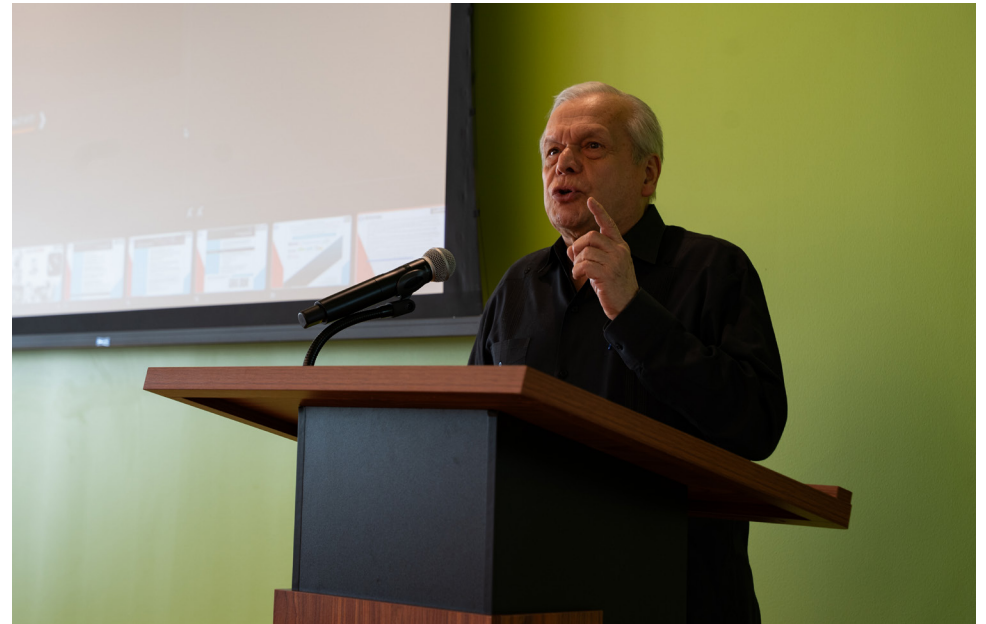
Luis Alejandro Molina
SENIOR ADVISOR
alejandrom@prcc-chgo.org



Alonso Vidal
Journalist/Reporter
alonsov@prcc-chgo.org

All photographs by
Alonso Vidal unless
stated otherwise.

At the Historic Puerto Rican Health Summit: Community and Scholars Grapple with Puerto Rican Health Challenges and Possibilities



José E. López, Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center

By Lisa Aponte-Soto

The Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago's Health and Wellness Committee hosted the 3rd Health Summit, "Regresando a Nuestras Raíces: Progresando Nuestra Salud a Través de Nuestra Cultura," on April 12, 2025, at the Humboldt Park Wellness Center. Building on the 2021 and 2022 summits' action items and policy recommendations, the 2025 summit focused on actionable, community-centered solutions and policy changes needed to improve the health and social well-being of Puerto Ricans in Chicago and the diaspora.

We engaged over 80 participants, including clinicians, researchers, evalu-

ators, practitioners, community leaders, residents, and students who brought the summit agenda to life through thoughtful engagement and shared commitment.

Keynote speakers José E. López and Juan González—activists, historians, cultural guides, mentors, and inspirational leaders—opened the event. The program featured 40 subject-matter experts, co-authors, collaborators, invited guests, and session facilitators. Together, attendees framed the historical context and current state of Puerto Rican health, discussing long-standing challenges, community assets, grassroots solutions, and policy recommen-



dations.

We created a vibrant community of practice where participants contributed as thought leaders, envisioning the changes needed to address the systemic inequities burdening our communities. Topics included aging and cognition, diabetes and cancer prevention, climate change, health communication, the HIV epidemic, maternal health, nutrition, and smoking cessation.

We also celebrated our culture through food, poetry, and music. Embracing healing by reclaiming our roots, poets Eduardo Archo and Lola Rosario grounded participants in the cultural and political history of Humboldt Park and Puerto Rico through their verses. The Chicago Cuatro Orchestra closed the summit with traditional Puerto Rican music.

The Puerto Rican Agenda is co-chaired by Natasha Brown and Rafael Caro-Cotto, who provide strategic direction, oversight, and leadership across its committees and initiatives. The Health and Wellness Committee

chez-Johnsen.

We extend our gratitude to the ASI Home Care Services team for keeping us nourished and beautifying the space, and to all volunteers and sponsors who made the summit possible—especially the Humboldt Park Wellness Center for hosting. Additional sponsors included ASI Home Care Services, Dr. Marina Del Ríos, Erie Family Health Centers, Giachello Consulting Group, the Puerto Rican Agenda, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Rincón Family Services, and Tanoma Consulting.

We're also thankful to Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School staff and student volunteers for helping the event run smoothly.

As we move forward, we'll compile a summary report and continue discussions on the summit's policy recommendations. To join the committee or planning team, email prhealthsummit@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at the 2027 summit!

and Summit are led by Drs. Lisa Aponte-Soto and Marta Cerda, J.D., with the support of passionate and committed members: Dr. Marina Del Ríos, Hilda Frontany, Dr. Aida Giachello (2021 Summit Chair), Susana González, Angie Jiménez, Anette Miranda, Dr. María Muñoz, Milton Rodríguez, and Dr. Lisa Sán-

ANNUAL WELLNESS FAIR ON PASEO BORICUA

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SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY JUNE. 07. 2025

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April 17, 2025

April 24, 2025

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THE PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER

El 50 Festival de Claridad Honra la Lucha Boricua en Chicago Con Su Dedicatoria al Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño JA Corretjer

By Clarisa López Ramos

El Festival de Apoyo a Claridad cumple 50 años de celebración. Una vez más, los terrenos del estacionamiento del Estadio Hiram Bithorn, en San Juan, serán el escenario de esta magna celebración. El Festival se llevará a cabo del 24 al 27 de abril de 2025.

Serán cuatro días llenos de la mejor música en vivo, artesanías únicas, delicias gastronómicas, baile, teatro, actividades para niños y mucho más. El Festival contará con dos tarimas, desde las cuales se presentarán decenas de agrupaciones representativas de los principales géneros que distinguen la cultura artístico-musical del país.

Este año, además de hacer la dedicatoria a las cinco décadas de esta fiesta del pueblo y de la lucha por la independencia —así como a los cientos de voluntarios y voluntarias que lo han hecho posible durante los pasados 50 años—, el Festival hace un paréntesis obligado para reconocer a quienes se han convertido en invaluable baluartes de este esfuerzo. Recios en la solidaridad con CLARIDAD y el Festival, son seres especiales que han estado dispuestos a colaborar para el éxito de nuestras iniciativas y actividades durante años



Credit Clarisa López Ramos

y décadas.

Además, el Festival será dedicado al Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño Juan Antonio Corretjer, de la ciudad de Chicago, y a su director ejecutivo, José López. Al igual que el Festival, el Centro celebró recientemente su 50 aniversario, para orgullo de la comunidad boricua.

“Para CLARIDAD, el Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño y uno de sus creadores y líderes, el querido compañero José López Rivera, están entre nuestros amigos y aliados más consecuentes. Su labor incansable en defensa de los derechos y los va-

lores de la comunidad boricua allá, y su extraordinaria colaboración con nuestro periódico y las luchas de nuestro pueblo, les hacen merecedores del más profundo respeto y agradecimiento de quienes reconocemos a todos los boricuas como hijos e hijas de una misma nación, no importa dónde estén. Por eso, nos enorgullecemos de presentarles un Reconocimiento Especial el domingo 27 de abril, a las 7:00 p.m., en el marco de nuestro 50 Festival de Apoyo a CLARIDAD”, lee parte de la carta de invitación que nos cursaron las compañeras Carmen Ortiz Abreu,

presidenta de la Junta Directiva de CLARIDAD; Alida Millán Ferrer, directora de CLARIDAD; y Madeline Ramírez Rivera, presidenta del Comité Organizador del Festival de Apoyo a CLARIDAD.

Para el Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño, es un honor poder recibir este reconocimiento especial, y allí estarán para celebrar juntos este 50 Festival de Apoyo a CLARIDAD.

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Los Cubs Honran a Nuestro Artista

Cristian Roldán

By *Alonso Vidal*

Este martes 27 de mayo, los Cubs jugarán contra los Rockies en Wrigley Field en celebración de la Herencia Puertorriqueña.

Para honrar la herencia puertorriqueña, se repartirán camisetas diseñadas por

nuestro artista local, Cristian Roldán (@roldan.aponte) a los asistentes el día del partidopor orden de llegada.

Además, Roldán lanzará el primer pitch durante el partido.

El artista dijo que se inspiró en patrones taínos,

que usualmente incorpora en su arte, para el diseño de la camiseta.

“Me siento contento. Llegue aquí hace 10 años y no me imaginé que fuese a hacer esto eventualmente,” dijo Roldán.

Remembering Cynthia Soto:

Her Spirit Will Speak For Us

By *Xiomara Rodríguez*

Following the unfortunate passing of former Illinois State Representative for the 4th District, Cynthia Soto, La Voz reflects on the powerful legacy she left behind.

Cynthia was born in San Antonio, Texas, to Lydia Niera and Ignacio Sánchez. She later made Chicago her home, where she dedicated herself to advocacy and public service. From 2001 to 2019, she proudly served as the Illinois State Representative for the 4th District. Throughout her 18 years in office, she made a lasting impact on the lives

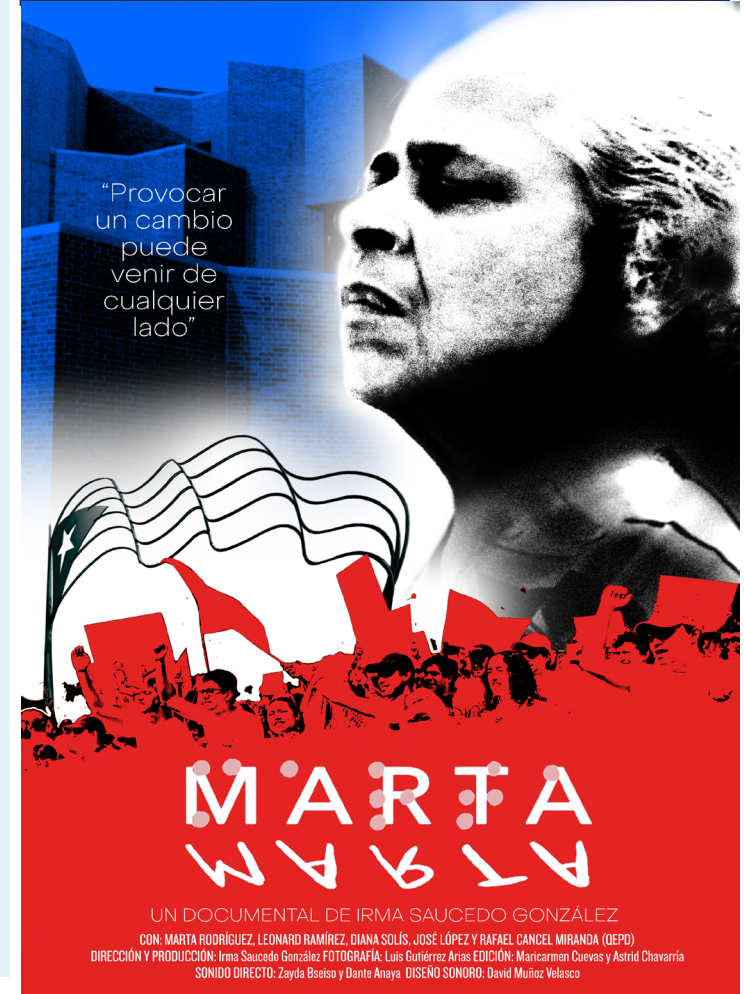
of many. Her leadership and commitment to her constituents earned her deep respect throughout the community.

As a member of key committees, some of Cynthia’s accomplishments included securing appropriations for public safety and advocating for health care access for low-income families in the community. She was also a close ally of Humboldt Park’s Puerto Rican community and played a vital role in establishing the National Puerto Rican Museum.

Cynthia was a passionate advocate for underserved communities, fighting for

equitable policies that amplified marginalized voices. She worked tirelessly to improve immigrant rights and supported initiatives that fostered economic growth and public safety in her district. Her contributions to community outreach programs and mentorship for future leaders left an indelible mark.

Cynthia’s leadership earned her numerous awards and recognitions throughout her career, further solidifying her legacy. May her life and work inspire us all to recommit ourselves to community, equity, and justice.



#CENTERFOLD

#CENTERFOLD

Ossamenta: Herminio Rodríguez's first USA solo exhibition at Oliva Gallery



Credit: Alexis Figueroa

By Alexis Figueroa

Herminio Rodríguez is one of Puerto Rico's most accomplished photographers.

With over 40 exhibitions under his wings—including multiple solo exhibitions in Puerto Rico—most notably his exhibition titled *Contaminados* at the Museo de Ballajá and the Interamerican University in Bayamón, his work has been used to raise awareness about the struggles of the Puerto Rican people and their ongoing fight against a corrupt government that continues to promote the destruction of our natural resources and the environmental contamination of our land.

Rodríguez obtained his B.A.

from the University of Puerto Rico and his M.F.A. from the Rochester Institute of Technology. He was a teacher at some of the most prestigious colleges and universities on the Island, including the University of Puerto Rico (UPR: Río Piedras and Carolina campuses), Escuela de Artes Plásticas (EAP), Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, and the Interamerican University. In 2022, he was awarded a residency at Segundo Ruiz Belvis in Chicago. Now, he presents his first solo exhibition at Oliva Gallery.

The show, titled *Ossamenta*, consists of a series of photographs exposing multiple abandoned locations across Puerto Rico—showing

us how a series of events, including natural disasters, systematic governmental corruption, economic recession, and the struggles of being a colony of the United States with no power over ourselves, has made us a lost paradise filled with uncertainty and distress, surrounded by beautiful beaches and landscapes that are now being sold to U.S. residents at bargain prices. With little to no property taxes for outsiders, these buyers have been purchasing everything on the Island, pushing us away from our own land.

In this series of photographs, there is no human presence—just abandoned architectural structures being overtaken by nature, likely a premonition of what was bound to happen to us. The agenda of the Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP), the pro-statehood party—where the ousted ex-governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, and his corrupt advisors once wrote in the well-known chat: “I saw the future. It’s so wonderful, there are no Puerto Ricans”—still casts a long shadow.

Rodríguez delights us with these exquisite, colorful

yet melancholic landscapes that give us hope—hope that nature, in reclaiming its once-occupied territory, may help us Puerto Ricans reclaim our Island and our country.

Exhibition Details: *Ossamenta*

Location: Oliva Gallery 3816 W Armitage Ave, Chicago, IL 60647

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April 2025

Join us on Sundays, 1 pm at

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to participate in tree ambassador programs, get goodies, and learn about the trees in our community.

Programs include:

Roots and Remembrances
Storytelling: Share stories about trees in your life and connect to different spaces and places!
April 13

Branching Out: A Tree Care Workshop Participants will learn tree care basics and get a tree care kit!
April 27



Voices of Trees: A Council Gathering

By Jane Nicholson

Step into the roots and branches of our forest neighbors in this unique community gathering. Inspired by the Council of All Beings, we will speak as the trees—giving voice to their struggles, their wisdom, and their hopes.

Together, we'll explore how human actions harm trees, from deforestation to urban stress, and reflect on what trees might ask of us if we listened with empathy.

Through storytelling, creative expression, and shared reflection, we'll deepen our connection to the non-human world—cultivating care, responsibility, and hope for a future where people and trees thrive together.

Come ready to listen, speak, and stand with the trees. Supplies and refreshments will be provided!

May 24 1 PM at Humboldt Park tba.



Credit: Jane Nicholson

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YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER:
Nelson Torres: NELSON@PRCC-CHGO.ORG. PHONE: 630-825-4011

DIRECTOR:
JENISE SANTIAGO
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For festival details, please scan the QR code
or visit cineyouthfest.org



In memoriam: John Belk, José Rosa, and Rafael Rivera Rosa

By Alexis Figueroa

Over the past few months, the Puerto Rican art scene has been hit hard by the passing of some of the Island's most important artists and collectors.

On February 7th, we lost philanthropist and top collector John Belk, who served as president of the board and was a founding father of the Museo de Puerto Rico. He was one of Puerto Rico's most respected collectors and arts patrons, helping countless artists throughout their careers. His contribution to Puerto Rican art is incalculable, and his passion for art



Credit Alexis Figueroa

was unparalleled. Belk had been a cornerstone of the art scene for the past 50 years—a great human being and humanitarian whose impact will continue to be felt.

On March 17th, we lost Rafael Rivera Rosa, a beloved teacher and artist who mastered painting, drawing, graphic design, digital art, and printmaking. Rivera Rosa began his career in surrealism before transitioning to abstract painting, becoming a master of the style. His prints from Taller Bija, which he co-founded with Nelson Sambolín, are considered among the most important works for the revolutionary pro-independence movement. A true freedom fighter, he was always willing to teach,

collaborate, and greet everyone with a smile. He was a great mentor and a joyful presence who made every space brighter.

On April 6th, we lost José Rosa Castellanos, one of Puerto Rico's most beloved and original artists. A master printer and standout student of Rafael Tufiño, Lorenzo Homar, and Domingo García, José created works full of creativity and originality—often using wordplay to deliver satirical and sarcastic commentary on religion, love, racism, social status, colonialism, politics, nightlife, freedom, independence, equality,

and justice. He excelled in painting, drawing, printmaking, and sculpture, becoming an “artist's artist” and one of the most decorated and cherished creators on the Island.



Credit Alexis Figueroa

Puerto Rico owes a heartfelt thank you to these three superstars who gave their all for the love of art and culture. We are eternally

grateful for their legacy—and their artwork will live on forever.

Rest in peace, John, Rafa, and José. You will be deeply missed.

In loving memory of Nereida Ortíz Santiago

By Kevin Santana

Nereida Ortíz Santiago, born in 1940 in the serene town of Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, passed away peacefully on March 25, 2025, at the age of 84. Her journey, deeply rooted in the community of Adjuntas, was marked by her faith in Christianity and her unwavering dedication to her family and friends.

Throughout her life, Nereida's greatest joy and achievement were

her five beloved children, each of whom she cherished dearly. Her nurturing spirit extended beyond her family, as she became known for her culinary skills, often sharing her love through the art of cooking. She also had a great passion for serving the community through outreach and religious engagement.

Her joyous spirit and undying loyalty to the community and to her loved ones will be greatly missed.



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14-21

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* **Yoga for Fighters & Mindfulness in Boxing**

* **Restorative Movements for Injury Prevention**

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From Healing in Movement:

We empower trauma survivors and community members to express and heal themselves by utilizing trauma-informed movement, education, and storytelling tools to break the cycles of abuse and foster internal as well as generational healing that disrupts all forms of violence in ourselves and our neighborhoods.



Our Patriot Edwin Cortés At 70 Continues The Struggle

By La Voz Staff

This interview has been edited for clarity.

In 1955 my father had come from Puerto Rico to Chicago in search of work. I was born on the south side of Chicago. Growing up, we lived on the south and west sides of the city, which are still the most under-developed areas of the city.

I attended the University of Illinois, Chicago, from 1974 to 1979. At the time, there were hardly any Latinos in the University, so we formed the Puerto Rican Student Union and the Latin American recruitment program to bring more Latinos into the institution.

Later, my brother Julio, my brother-in-law, and I began working to build the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Humboldt Park.

All that work raised our consciousness and led us to fight for Puerto Rican independence from this side of the Diaspora – here in Chicago. However, the struggle for Puerto Rican independence continues today.

In 1983, I was arrested, charged with seditious conspiracy, and sentenced to 35 years in prison. The charge was conspiring to overthrow the United States government by force and violence. I then became part of the third generation of Puerto Ricans charged with sedition. However, President Clinton commuted our sentences on September 9, 2000.

Since 2014, I've been back in Chicago and have been working at The Puerto Rican Cultural Center as a medical case manager.

There, I have been involved in public health initiatives, in housing for HIV positive clients, and housing for community members experiencing housing insecurity.

It's important to continue educating our youth and to get them involved in not only transforming our communities here in the United States but also in the fight against colonialism in Puerto Rico.








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Image of Partial Open Mic Ensemble & Host Xiomara Rivera

Join us for the VPI's open mic night, held monthly @UrbanTheater at Barrio Boriken, where creativity takes center stage! Whether you're a seasoned performer or stepping up for the first time, our supportive VPI community welcomes poets, musicians, comedians, and storytellers of all kinds.

It's a fantastic opportunity to share your talents, connect with like-minded individuals, and enjoy a night filled with diverse performances. Mark your calendars, bring your friends, and become part of this vibrant artistic movement.

Stay tuned for the next one announced for April on instagram @PRCCVPI

For more information contact:
XiomaraRivera@prcc-chgo.org
Cell: 872-216-6756



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47TH PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE'S DAY PARADE

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• 30th Anniversary of the Flag of Steel on Paseo Boricua,
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• 20th Anniversary of the Urban Theater Company
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