



CONNECT

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Celebration of Hispanic Heritage

By: Tyler Plogher, BS

Across the country and in many neighboring nations to the south, the next one to two months will be marked by festivals, celebrations, and other cultural events in recognition of Hispanic heritage. In the United States, this period of commemoration is known as National Hispanic Heritage Month and is officially celebrated from September 15th to October 15th.

What is the significance of September 15th?

On September 15th, two hundred years ago this year, most Central American nations declared their independence from the Spanish Empire, which for centuries had shaped the culture, laws, and the landscape of the region through the infliction of great loss of life and trauma on indigenous peoples. As time passed, diverse new identities were forged. Many with Hispanic ancestry, those from Latin America, and those who identified with Latin American cultures more generally became known as Hispanic or Latino Americans.

DIVERSITY EQUITY &
ENGAGEMENT
NEWSLETTER

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CELEBRATION OF HISPANIC HERITAGE

CONTINUED...

Our national identity has always been influenced by Hispanic and Latino Americans, even before these modern identities had developed. Indeed, according to the Smithsonian, the oldest city in the United States was not founded by the English, but the Spanish – St. Augustine, Florida was founded in 1565, a full 42 years earlier than Jamestown (Blitz, 2015). Yet, nearly 500 years of Hispanic contributions to our society have often been downplayed or ignored altogether. At other times, Hispanic peoples have been used as political scapegoats, and they continue to be the victims of hate crimes in the United States – now more than ever. In 2019, there were more documented, hate-motivated killings of Hispanic and Latino Americans than ever before (FBI, 2019).

As always, it is our sincere hope that through creating opportunities for open dialogue and through stimulating meaningful conversation, we might begin making steps toward addressing misunderstandings, while also fostering sincere appreciation for the accomplishments and beauty of the differences that define us – and have defined us, in this case, for nearly half a millennium. With this context and admittedly brief background in mind, we hope you enjoy our September installment of The Connect!



CONTRIBUTIONS OF LATINOS WITH IN UNITED STATES



LANGUAGE

The Latino culture has influences the United States dialect. Nearly 41 million homes in the country speak Spanish and it is now the second most studied language in educational institutions.



HEALTHCARE

Miguel Angel Ondetti invented "Proline Derivatives and Related Compounds" also know as angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors to treat hypertension.



MUSIC

William R. Cumpiano invented the compression molded composite guitar soundboard.



TECHNOLOGY

Fernando Torres invented the automatic selection of SIM Cards in Mobile Devices



Spotlight on: Diana Diaz



By: Terry Gish

Diana Diaz is a two-year employee working as a Skills Development Specialist based out of the Moran Center.

Ethnically, Diana identifies as Hispanic, but she is quick to tell you, “I’m triple-American!” Diana was born in North America (specifically Manhattan), her father born in Central America, and her mother was born in South America. So, she proudly claims all locations when discussing her heritage.

Diana and her husband relocated to this area when her husband took a job in Holland, Indiana. When I asked how welcoming she thought this area was to Hispanic residents, Diana admitted that the reception was not always friendly. For example, once, at a local department store, she heard an employee-in-training being told that they needed to be on the lookout for Mexicans in the store, since “they’ve been stealing a lot of things.”

Like me, Diana is a genealogy buff, and she is very respectful of her Hispanic history. She told me that her father grew up in Nicaragua and helped distribute rations under the country’s Communist rule. She can also trace her maternal family’s movement from “the top of Peru toward Ecuador.” When she visited Ecuador in 2014, she noted, “A lot of my family still speaks Quechuan,” a language that originated in the Peruvian Andes. Where Diana really lets her heritage shine, though, is her cooking.

“My food menu at home looks completely off,” Diana laughed. She said having one parent from Central America, another parent from South America, and growing up in “a Puerto Rican neighborhood” makes the food that she cooks especially diverse. She has even learned to say the word “straw” in seven different versions of Spanish, so if you ask for an iced beverage at her house, she’s got you covered.

I asked Diana how Southwestern could better recognize, respect, and celebrate Spanish heritage. She replied that it’s vital that we flag the charts of clients who only speak Spanish, because language barriers prevent many in the community from seeking or receiving services that they desperately need. Diana said that she has seen people’s faces “light up” when they hear someone speaking in a familiar tongue. She added that having someone to interpret helped one family get the aid they needed to leave the shelter and have a home to call their own. In addition, Diana said that the availability of Spanish-speaking providers is especially relevant now because of an influx of Venezuelan immigrants in this area.

Thanks to Diana Diaz for taking the time to share her time and story with us.

BE INCLUDED

Help us figure out where we are, so we know where we need to go!

All Staff **Climate** Survey

**** This survey will be used to measure staff perceptions of their value, respect, and inclusion at Southwestern Behavioral. ****

Date: September 13-26, 2021

This survey should take around 10 minutes and must be completed in one sitting, so please allow yourself enough time to respond to all questions.

ENTER A CHANCE TO WIN A \$20.00 GIFT CARD!

Take a picture and start the survey!



**Climate Assessment Presented by:
D.E.E. Committee**

Assessment Data Collector: Diehl Consulting Group



REFERENCES

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