

Winter 2021

## Que Ondee Sola - Winter 2021

Crystal Lynn Perez

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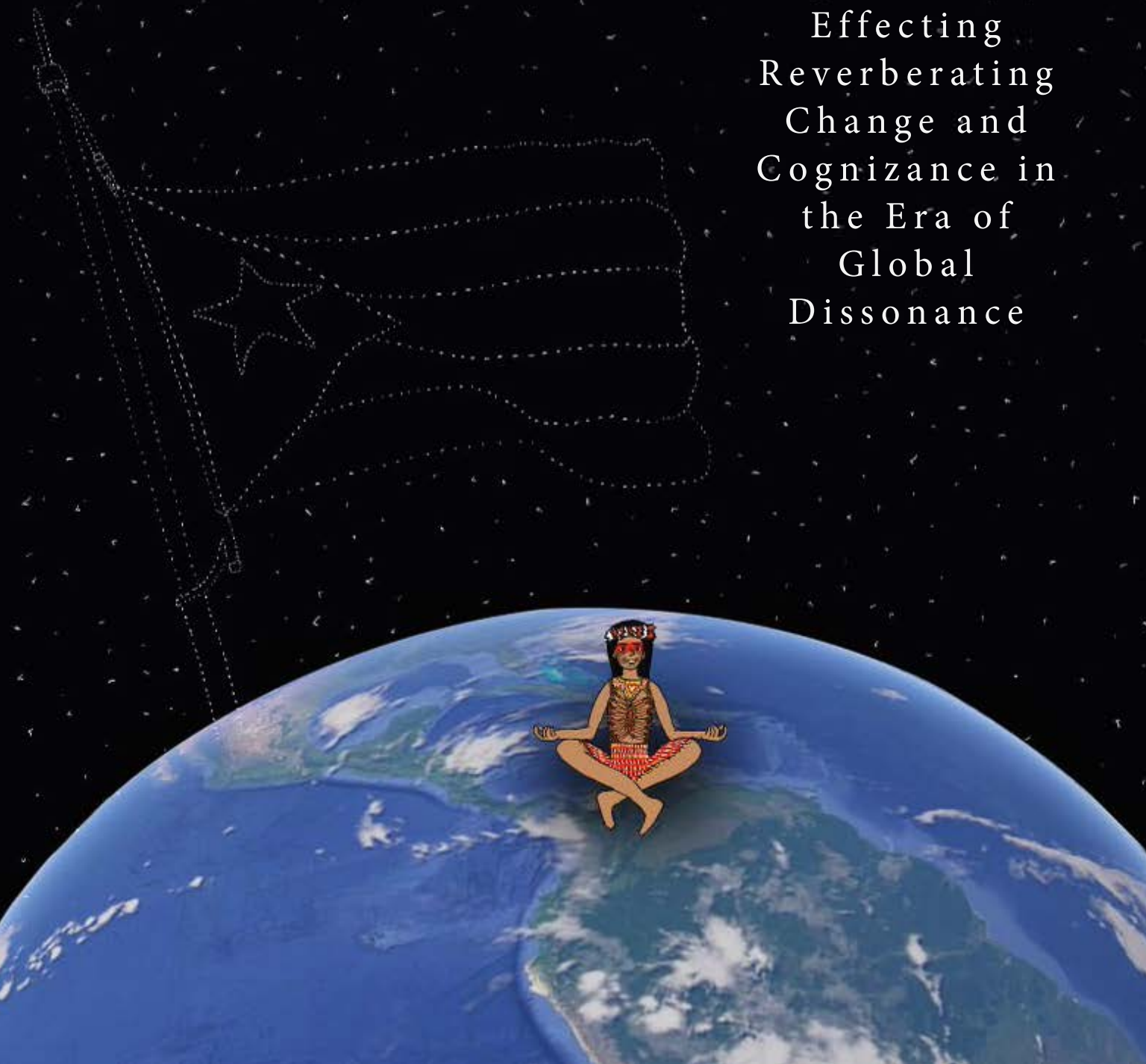
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Winter 2021

# QUE ONDEE SOLA

## CREANDO CONCIENCIA

Effecting  
Reverberating  
Change and  
Cognizance in  
the Era of  
Global  
Dissonance



# QOS CONTRIBUTORS



**Crystal Lynn Pérez** is in her last semester here at NEIU majoring in English and minoring in Linguistics. She is proud to represent and lead the QOS team whom are filled with passionate, talented, and dedicated members. She hopes to continue honoring the great legacy of the Que Onde Sola organization.



**Andrea Mendoza** is a senior majoring in Economics, with a minor in Psychology. Her passion for art led her to explore roles at NEIU's Media Board where she could exercise her creativity. She started painting at the age of 12, and acrylic paint continues to be her preferred medium. Que Onde Sola has provided her with an opportunity to express herself artistically, but also to give back to the NEIU community, whom she considers to be a lifelong family.

**Robert Johnson** is a student of History and Sociology at NEIU, currently completing research on the history of Puerto Rican student activism in Chicago during the 1970s. His personal mission is to uncover and to preserve history in its necessary complexity, avoiding clean narratives that erase lived truths. His other research interests have brought him not just to Puerto Rico, but also Cuba, México, Colombia, and numerous countries in Europe.



**Savannah Owens** is majoring in Graphic Design and minoring in Photography. She was a transfer student during the Fall 2021 semester and is very involved in all of the Media Organizations here at NEIU. She is the active Production Manager in charge of creating the overall look for the digital and print versions for The Independent, SEEDS and Que Onde Sola. In her free time she likes to create art with a focus in graphite, charcoal and ink.



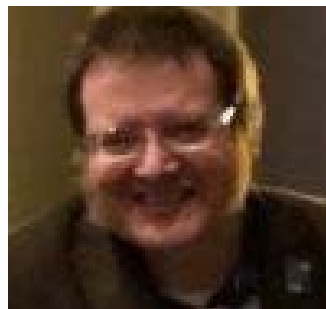
**Kelvin Trejo** is an immigrant from Honduras. He began his education with English as a Second Language classes in the Adult Education program of the College of Lake County in 2012. Kelvin obtained his High School Equivalency certificate in 2014 and later graduated with an Associate in business in 2019. Kelvin is a Senior majoring in Human Resource Development, with a minor in Spanish here at NEIU. Kelvin has been a very active student participating in different student's activities while working hard to manage school, work, and family responsibilities.



**Jasmine Rodriguez** is a transfer student from Harry S. Truman College. She is majoring in English at NEIU. She is a co-pyeditor for NEIU's campus newspaper, The Independent, and NEIU's LatinX magazine, Que Onde Sola (QOS).



**Aaron Le** is a student majoring in Marketing. Aaron's various leadership positions in numerous student-registered organizations on the NEIU campus has led him to continue seeking other opportunities on campus that work with students, by students. Aaron's organizational skills and leadership traits are what brought him to the administrative side of the NEIU Student Media Board. In Aaron's free time, he enjoys listening to music and taking photography.



**Jim Jones** is a Contributing Writer for QOS. He has two degrees in Linguistics (University of Chicago and NEIU). He is working on a second MA. He's a former award-winning member of the Society for Technical Communication, where he helped to manage a technical workshop program, Jim is a member of the American Translators Association. In the years leading up to 2017, he helped the ATA develop its first-ever Chinese to English Certification program, which he currently chairs. Jim is a freelance editor, writer, translator, illustrator, and cartoonist. He also does tutoring for Mandarin.



**Dennis Sagel** has an extensive media and community organizing background in areas including journalism, arts, events programming and social advocacy. Dennis has been working in event production, journalism, radio, engineering, mentoring students, volunteer management, theatre and community organizing with multiple media outlets and several arts organizations in the Chicago community and several universities including Northeastern Illinois University.



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# Letter from the Editor



**Crystal Lynn Pérez**  
Editor-in-Chief

As this challenging year comes to a close, I want to thank my entire team for their passion, dedication, and love that they have put into the Que Ondee Sola media organization. The QOS organization began as a revolutionary Puerto Rican magazine fighting against US colonialism in Puerto Rico founded by Dr. Torre here in Chicago at NEIU which envisioned the dignity of the Latino upheld and the needs of the community addressed. Today, the Puerto Rican remains colonized however, whether in territorial status (Colony), practicing the colonizer's religion (Christianity), and even speaking the colonizer's language (Spanish). Latin America must rise up again and reclaim its Native American indigenous identity by decolonizing itself through native language learning, and relearning ancient religious and cultural traditions. Latinos are the descendants of Native Americans and as such should bask in the glory of their historical greatness. ¡Que viva Abya Yala (Latín América) y que viva la humanidad!

# Interview with Brenda Hernandez

Interview by: Andrea Mendoza

**Q:** How does your experience as a Latina influence your work? Does your experience impact your work at all?

**A:** Well my heritage as a Latin American is something I think many of us have yet to discover. For me it's been definitely a struggle to understand where I fit in as a first generation immigrant in my community and in the art world. As a family we definitely carry more traditional Mexican values but a lot of it is getting lost throughout the years due to assimilation. Noticing that, I've been consciously looking for ways to express the desire of being who I am as a so-called "pocha". Consisting mostly of American influences and the curiosity to discover what we left behind. It impacts me and my art in ways I can't even understand, I am a part of a whole batch of differences that make up the Latina experience and it's very hard to define and identify at this time in history.

**Q:** How did you decide on photography?

**A:** I remember taking a picture of ice melting on a windshield wiper in middle school and in the background was a very blue/reddish sunset behind the trees but the focus was on the ice. You couldn't tell where I had photographed it from and I think I realized then how much context mattered. And how visually, we miss such beautiful scenery because we take in so much all at once. The rest of that winter I took so many photographs of my town, my dog, myself and it was like something clicked in my head too and in my appreciation of the world. I just loved taking pictures and it became my thing. I was the girl with the camera from then on.

**Q:** Who are your biggest artistic influences?

**A:** They change all of the time. Photographer wise I love Danny Lyon, Larry Clark, Mike Brodie. I'm in love with the experience of the misfit and the rebel. I think photography has this fearlessness that's embedded into it like you have to not be afraid to get in trouble with people. Not a lot of people like to be so vulnerable and then let you take a picture.

**Q:** Do you think you have a role as an artist in society?

**A:** Yes. Somehow you agree to express something we can all agree existed but not many saw when you become an artist. I value the privilege I have to be able to create that image or capture that moment.

**Q:** Do you hope to inspire others? If so, whom and how?

**A:** I hope it does but I'm not aiming for it. I can't speak for all women or all photographers or all Latinas. I'm mostly hoping to share something impactful to whoever wants to listen. And even then it's up to them to interpret and gain something from it. If I get noticed for it awesome but if I don't it won't stop me from making art.

Brenda Hernandez is a multidisciplinary artist focusing on photography and post processing techniques. Currently based in Chicago, IL she graduated with an associates degree from Harrington College of Design in 2016.

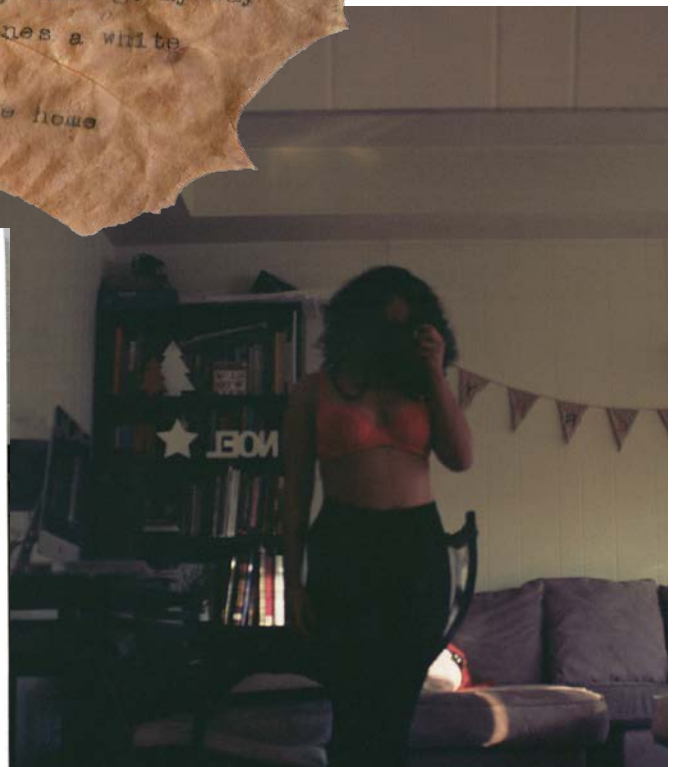
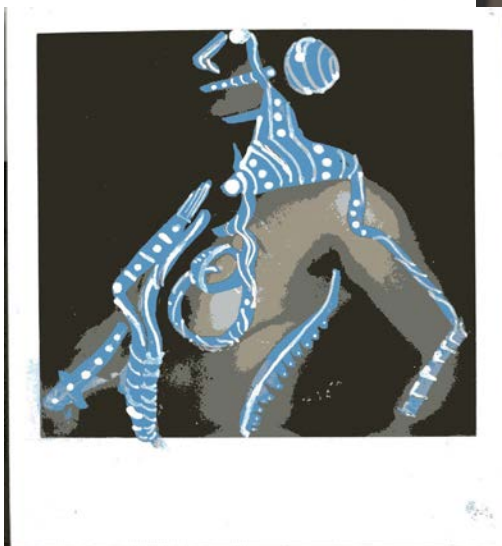
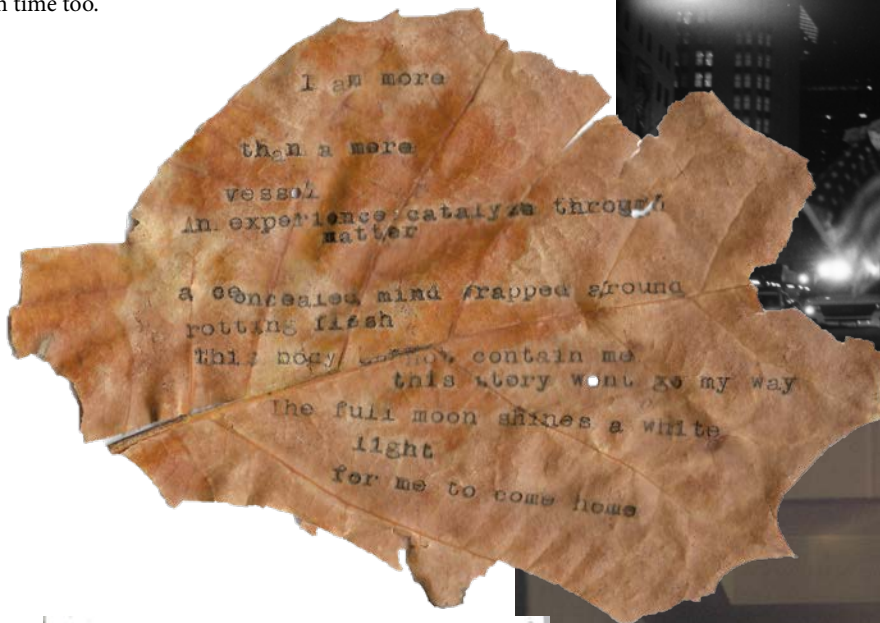
**Q:** What is one piece of advice you would give to yourself as an artist in college?

**A:** To have done more art and stayed more organized and less guarded from better artists.

**Q:** How can the community be supportive to artists such as yourself?

**A:** I'm not really sure. I would love for people (including myself) to just start showing up on time. Whether you're gonna see a friend's show or you guys agreed to jam or you have to use someone else's printer.

It just means a lot and subconsciously I think you have a better chance to start showing up for yourself on time too.





# Boricua en la Luna

Written by: Juan Antonio Corretjer

Translated by: Robert Johnson

**J**uan Antonio Corretjer (1908 Ciales – 1985 San Juan) was a Puerto Rican nationalist journalist and political activist. In addition to this work, Corretjer was a renowned poet. He was imprisoned in the 1930s for his membership in the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, and he would go on to lead the Puerto Rican Socialist League. This poem was popularized as a song by Roy Brown Ramírez and became an unofficial anthem of the Puerto Rican diaspora.

Translator's Note: This poem is a series of décimas, a traditional format associated with trova singers of Puerto Rico. The stanzas consist of ten lines of eight syllables each, conforming to a specific rhyme scheme. It is practically impossible to translate such a work while maintaining its structure without mangling its meaning. I did my best to produce a somewhat literal translation instead, even though many words have nuanced or double meanings that cannot be translated effectively. The words Boricua and Borincano, used in this poem, are derived from the Taíno word for Puerto Rico, meaning "homeland of the people," and are used as a signifier of shared heritage that transcends race. As this poem illustrates, Boricua identity transcends geography as well.



### Boricua en la Luna

Desde las ondas del mar  
que son besos a su orilla,  
una mujer de Aguadilla  
vino a New York a cantar.  
Pero no, sólo a llorar  
un largo llanto y morir.  
De ese llanto yo nací  
como en la lluvia una fiera.  
Y vivo en larga espera  
de cobrar lo que perdí.

Por un cielo que se hacía  
más feo mas más volaba  
a Nueva York se acercaba  
un peón de Las Marías.  
Con la esperanza, decía,  
de un largo día volver.  
Pero antes me hizo nacer  
y de tanto trabajar  
se quedó sin regresar:  
reventó en un taller.

De una lágrima soy hijo  
y soy hijo del sudor  
y fue mi abuelo el amor  
único en mi regocijo  
del recuerdo siempre fijo  
en aquel cristal del llanto  
como quimera en el canto  
de un Puerto Rico de ensueño  
y yo soy Puertorriqueño,  
sin na, pero sin quebranto.

Y el "echón" que me desmienta  
que se ande muy derecho  
no sea en lo más estrecho  
de un zaguán pague la afrenta.  
Pues según alguien me cuenta:  
dicen que la luna es una  
sea del mar o sea montuna.  
Y así le grito al villano:  
yo sería borincano  
aunque naciera en la luna.

### Boricua on the Moon

From where the waves of the sea  
are like kisses to its shore,  
a woman from Aguadilla  
came to New York to sing.  
But no, rather just to cry  
a long plaintive cry and to die.  
From this sobbing I was born  
like a beast in the rain.  
And I live in long wait  
to recover what I have been denied.

Through a sky that was getting  
uglier, so much uglier, as he flew,  
a laborer from Las Marías  
was approaching Nueva York.  
With the hope, he would say,  
to return one distant day.  
But before that he gave me birth  
and as a result of so much work  
he remained without returning:  
worked to death in a factory.

I am the child of a teardrop  
and I am the child of sweat  
and it was from my grandfather  
the love unique in my joy  
of the memory ever fixed  
in that crystal of tears  
like a fantasy in song  
of a dreamed Puerto Rico  
and I am Puerto Rican,  
with nothing, but unbroken.

Some showoff who would deny my identity  
and carries himself so properly  
unapproachable in his contempt  
insults me from a doorway.  
Well, somebody told me once:  
they say that the moon is made up  
of seas and mountain ranges.  
And so I shout at the villain:  
I would be borincano  
even if I was born on the moon.

1. Coastal city near the northwestern corner of the main island of Puerto Rico.
2. A mountainous area previously known for the production of oranges, but whose economy was destroyed by U.S. policies meant to prevent its competition with Florida.

# Bilingual

Written by: Kelvin Trejo

A few years ago, I made the decision to move from Honduras to the United States of America looking for better opportunities. Overall, it was difficult because this country is a place completely different from my country. The food is different, the places (cities) are different, everything is different here, even the language and many immigrants like me are forced to learn a new language in order to communicate with others.

Aprendemos el lenguaje para poder sobrevivir. You can imagine how hard it was. But I knew I was in the right place because the USA is the land of opportunities.

Back in Honduras my biggest dream as a child was one day to attend the UNAH (University of Honduras), but I thought my dream was canceled when I immigrated to the USA.

Then, I learned about the programs that many institutions offer to adult students, and I started dreaming again about getting an education. I still remember the summer of 2012 when I decided to start taking classes at the College of Lake County through the Adult Education program. My sister suggested I start taking ESL classes and she guided me through the process.

Taking ESL classes was hard. At the beginning, I could not understand a single English word. I knew I had a long way to go. One time one of my professors told us a joke. The whole class was hysterically laughing, and I looked around completely missing the joke. But I continued taking English classes for three years until I got to the point where I could understand the joke.

Besides not understanding a joke, I also have been criticized when not speaking English correctly.

**That is not the correct pronunciation of that word!**

**You have a strong accent when you speak English!**

**¡Ya te crees gringo!**

**You sound funny when speaking English!**

These are some of the statements that people have made about me and many others from other cultures who try to learn the English language.

I have heard a lot of people questioning: Why Latinos do not learn English? But the real question should be: Why is it so difficult for Latinos to learn the English language?

According to Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, community colleges are the number one providers of Adult Education and the ESL program represents 40% of the enrolments.

This means that Latinos want to learn English, but it is hard to speak English because of the fear of someone making fun of them (us). Also Latinos represent the USA workforce, and work long hours to support their families.

I am bilingual, and I also completed my dream of getting higher education. I am graduating with a bachelor's degree and all my classes were in English.

Some people made fun of me for not pronouncing a word correctly, but I am so proud of been able to communicate in two of the most important languages in the world English and Español.

**I am bilingual!**

**It was a long road.**

**Lots of ESL classes.**

**Hard work.**

**Busy life.**

**Ups and downs.**

It's hard, but when you want something, you try your very best to get what you want.



Written by: Jim Jones



Are you thinking about learning a foreign language? I'd like to encourage you and I'd say that learning the language and culture of a people that is not your own is very interesting and rewarding.

I myself did really well studying foreign languages when I was young. But I know full well that not everyone is the same as I was.

I also know what learning and studying languages and cultures really takes is persistence and a respectful way of thinking about people who are not from your culture. (Suggested: ...really takes. It takes per-

sistence. And it takes a respectful...)

It doesn't matter if you speak the language with an accent or make some mistakes. These things can happen to anyone. It's normal. So, have at it! Maybe you will surprise yourself.

And if you are a heritage speaker of Spanish, think about the possibility of using a course or two to improve your Spanish skills. It may well be a very good thing for you.

# HIV Awareness Month

Written by: Andrea Mendoza

## What is HIV and why is it important to know about?

According to HIV.Gov,

- Approximately 1.2 million people in the U.S. have HIV. About 13 percent of them don't know it and need testing.
- In 2019, an estimated 34,800 new HIV infections occurred in the United States.
- New HIV infections declined 8 % from 37,800 in 2015 to 34,800 in 2019, after a period of general stability.
- In 2019, 36,801 people received an HIV diagnosis in the U.S. and 6 dependent areas—an overall 9% decrease compared with 2015.”

“HIV is a virus that attacks the human immune system. There is no cure for HIV. Unlike some other viruses, such as the common cold, HIV cannot be cleared from the body. However, there are treatments available. HIV attacks and destroys CD4 T-cells — important immune system cells that help your body fight infections. The more CD4 T-cells that are destroyed, the weaker your immune system can become. With fewer CD4 T-cells due to HIV, it can be harder for your body to fight illnesses and infections.”- [www.biktarvy.com](http://www.biktarvy.com)

## Who is most affected by HIV?

According to HIV.Gov, In 2019, the highest rate was for Blacks/African American persons (42.1), followed by Hispanic/Latino persons (21.7) and persons of multiple races (18.4). In 2019, the rate for males (21.0) was five times the rate for females (4.5).

## How to live healthy with HIV?

Avoiding sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Using protection every time you have sex.

Never sharing or reusing needles.

Getting help with substance abuse, stress, or depression.

Exercising and eating well.

Stopping smoking. Smoking can be more harmful to people living with HIV.- [www.biktarvy.com](http://www.biktarvy.com)

## Sources to get tested for and informed about HIV:

Howard Brown Health Center

Center on Halsted

NEIU Student Health Services ( E 051)



Photo Credits: Creative Commons, Creator: Jacinta Iluch Valero



# La semana del listón rojo

Written by: Kelvin Trejo

Hablar sobre el tema de las drogas es un poco difícil, es por eso que la campaña de la semana de listón rojo ayuda a que podamos transmitir el mensaje a los niños y jóvenes, de una manera más divertida

En la semana del 23 al 31 de octubre se celebró la semana del listón rojo (Red Ribbon Week). En esta semana se realizan diferentes actividades en muchas de las organizaciones educativas de los Estados Unidos, especialmente en las escuelas primarias, para crear conciencia sobre el abuso de las drogas en la juventud.

Con esta campaña se pretende concientizar a los niños y adolescentes sobre las consecuencias del uso de sustancias adictivas. La meta de la semana del listón rojo es mostrar a los jóvenes, que se puede vivir feliz sin necesidad del uso de drogas o sustancias dañinas. La temática de este año 2021 fue "Drug Free Look Like me" lo que invita a los jóvenes a darse cuenta de que una vida libre de drogas es una vida que relumbra mucho mejor.

Las escuelas realizan diferentes actividades para cada día de la semana del listón rojo: El lunes los niños se visten de rojo, el martes usan un gorro, el miércoles calcetines locos, el jueves indumentario de la escuela y el viernes vestirse de superhéroe.

Aunque este tema de las drogas suele ser un poco incómodo, es muy importante hablar sobre ello ya que nuestros hijos, familiares, vecinos y amigos están expuestos a las drogas desde una edad muy temprana. Por otra parte, el abuso de las drogas afecta en gran parte a la comunidad latina.

Según el National Intutued on Drug Abuse, en el 2004 uno de cada cinco muchos latinos en el 8º grado había utilizado, por lo menos una vez, algún tipo de droga ilícita.

Tristemente la comunidad latina es un grupo vulnerable ya que un gran número de la población no cuenta con un seguro médico y es muy difícil poder acceder a ayuda profesional para tratar los problemas de salud mental y muchos de estos jóvenes llegan a la edad adulta enfrentando problemas de depresión y ansiedad.

Por todo esto es nuestro compromiso, crear conciencia en los jóvenes de que el uso de las drogas no es la salida a los problemas de salud mental. La campaña de la semana del listón rojo es la campaña más grande de prevención del abuso de las drogas en los Estados Unidos.

Si escuchas a tu hermano/a, algún familiar o amigo hablar sobre la celebración da la semana del listón rojo en su escuela, apóyale, recuerda que el problema de adicción a las drogas muchas veces empieza a una edad muy prematura.

Para conocer más sobre la campana "Red Ribbon Campaign" visita: [www.redribbon.org](http://www.redribbon.org)

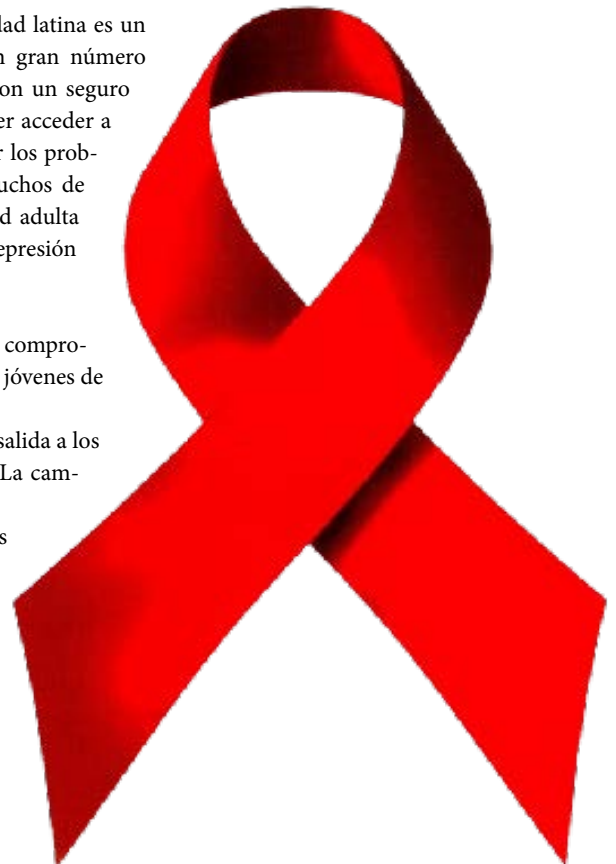


Photo Credits: iStock Photo

# Aquí Estoy The Origin of “El Centro”

Written by: Robert Johnson

In June 1966, the Division Street Riots, caused by and characterized by excessive violence and repression from the Chicago Police against Puerto Ricans in West Town, resulted in a reckoning by city and state officials, who finally underwent a process of self-reflection, which resulted in some well-meaning outreach efforts, including Northeastern Illinois State College's agreement to support an education center in the West Town community. In March 1969, Aquí Estoy (“Here I am” in Spanish) was founded by Rose Brandzel, a faculty member at the college and long-time English tutor, and student Rosa Hernández, who served as its first director. At first, Aquí Estoy focused on ESL and GED efforts, primarily serving factory workers in the Puerto Rican community seeking better professional and financial opportunity.

Sadly, in the early 1970s, Aquí Estoy had all but shut down, without the concerted efforts of its founders and in the face of an apathetic university administration. Students Silvia Rodríguez and Elba Rivera helped organize an effort by the Union for Puerto Rican Students (UPRS) and Northeastern alumni, which resulted in the hiring of Miguel Velázquez, who, even though only 25 years old at the time, already had experience as a bilingual high school teacher, university advisor, and as a director of an adult education program that served the Spanish-speaking community.

Mr. Velázquez was tasked with an ambitious expansion of the program, which would now serve as Northeastern's satellite campus in the West Town community. Its mission would not only be these ESL and GED efforts, but also to provide opportunities for college courses to be taken locally within the community. Now renamed C.L.A.S.E.S. (Centro Latino Adelantando Sus Estudios Superiores, or Latin Center for Advancing Your Higher Studies) to illustrate its expanded mission, the University leased a building at North and Artesian Avenues, on the opposite corner from the famous Puerto Rican mural, la Crucifixión de Don Pedro Albizu Campos. In a scheme that would likely have been the greatest real estate investment Northeastern has made in its history, the owner was to donate the land and the building for the large tax credit he would receive.



Rosa Hernández circa 1971

Source: American Education, Vol. 7, No. 2, March 1971, published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare



Miguel Velázquez and his student assistant Aida Ileana Laboy at the construction site, January 1975. Source: NEIU University Archives



Lucha Estudiantil, Vol. 1 No. 3, December 1975.

Source: Author's personal archive





Photo of the mural La crucifixión de Don Pedro Albizu Campos taken from the C.L.A.S.E.S. building, January 1975. This mural was painted by the Puerto Rican Art Association, painted by UPRS founder Héctor Luis Rosario, José Bermúdez, and Mario Galán. The text in the lower right that gave credit for this work has recently been covered up by the latest restoration.

Source: NEIU University Archives

With construction efforts stymied, and local community pressure that led Velázquez to run against indicted Alderman Thomas Keane's wife, who was running in his place, many students on the main campus of Northeastern felt that it was due to distracted leadership that further development of C.L.A.S.E.S. was running behind schedule. It was at this time that the UPRS intervened, while Velázquez was out of town on paid vacation. The Union's vice-president even questioned Velázquez's Puerto Ricanness in the school newspaper: "Miguel Velazquez is no longer nor can be considered a Puerto Rican."

Miguel Velázquez was born in Moca, Puerto Rico, then grew up in slum apartments and housing projects on the West and South Sides of Chicago, one of ten children who would never have a permanent residence in their youth. If anyone lived some of the worst that Chicago had to offer Puerto Rican migrants, it was Velázquez.



Photo from Que Ondee Sola, taken September 23, 1972, the day after the 150th anniversary of the Grito de Lares. The participants are standing up for Puerto Rican independence, facing the mural, "La crucifixión de Don Pedro Albizu Campos." The building in the background would become the C.L.A.S.E.S. building, but there is now a Walgreens there. Maximino Torres, the director of Proyecto Pa'lante, with dark hair and glasses towards the right

Source: QOS Archives

The ripple effect of Velázquez's dismissal in February 1975 was monumental in influence. John Major, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, publicly opposed University President Mullen's decision to bow to student pressure without an examination of the facts involved. Major would soon be forced to resign, and the unpopular Mullen would likewise resign within a year. The inability of student activists and administration officials to agree on a replacement to lead C.L.A.S.E.S., an impasse that would last several months, led to the almost complete destruction of this academic outreach program. It would be moved to the Far West Side, far from the community it was meant to serve. Now it is known simply as El Centro, this previous effort at community outreach reduced to simply a name put on a building next to the expressway. The building that was to be C.L.A.S.E.S. has been replaced by a Walgreens.

The president of the UPRS, who had put his signature to the accusations against Velázquez, would be ousted, and the Puerto Rican student community would split into two, and then three organizations. Even Que Ondee Sola itself was subject to something of a "tug-of-war" match, so contentious that the lock to the dark room was changed. A new UPRS newspaper, Lucha Estudiantil, would briefly be published, and its December issue would be the centerpiece to litigation among faculty that included eighty hours of testimony, massive legal costs, and, in the end, a great waste of time that entangled the faculty of the Sociology Department, delaying the implementation of the Justice Studies program.

To Miguel Velázquez's credit, he would go on to a long career as a Chicago Public School administrator, last serving until his retirement as the Principal of Eli Whitney Elementary School, where, among other things, he invested the school's discretionary funding to employ a full-time social worker, unheard of in a public school climate where these funds are often used to reward and enrich faculty and staff. It is hard to say what may have been if the events of early 1975 had occurred just a little differently. Well-meaning idealists on all sides of the dispute found themselves distracted by conflicts over Puerto Rican identity, playing into the hands of ongoing efforts to divide the Puerto Rican community, which remains strongest when united, as does all of humanity.

<sup>1</sup> No longer the appropriate term, but English as a Second Language was the nomenclature at the time

<sup>2</sup> Created in 1971 by UPRS founder Héctor Luis Rosario, José Bermúdez, and Mario Galán. It remains in this spot over fifty years later after two restorations.

<sup>3</sup> Some may recall recent expansion into the surrounding neighborhood, property that has neither appreciated in value nor is currently utilized by NEIU, or entrusting The Nest to a for-profit corporation that has resulted in obvious to foresee but ostensibly unforeseen debt.

<sup>4</sup> The UPRS had already opposed Velázquez due to his unwillingness to center curriculum on Puerto Rican liberation, rather than focusing on the practical goals of the program

<sup>5</sup> Print Vol. 6 No. 6: Friday, 21 February 1975, attributed to Luis Gutiérrez. See Boricua en la luna in this issue to clarify why this was and remains problematic.

<sup>6</sup> Retained in the author's personal archive

