

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of Communications

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White House Highlights Cesar E. Chavez “Champions of Change”

WASHINGTON, DC – On Monday, March 31st, the White House will honor 10 community leaders who embody the spirit of Cesar E. Chavez’ legacy. Each of the Cesar Chavez Champions of Change have committed themselves to improving the lives of others in their communities and across the country. At the core, all of our honorees represent the values and steadfast determination of Cesar Chavez to organize ourselves for a more just tomorrow.

These recognitions are part of the Administration’s effort to celebrate Chavez’ extraordinary commitment to a lifetime of service. At a screening of the new feature film *Cesar Chavez*, President Obama reflected on Chavez’ legacy stating, “One of the great lessons of Cesar’s life (is) that you don’t give up the fight. No matter how long it takes, no matter how long the odds, you keep going, fueled by a simple creed – si se puede.” As part of the Administration-wide effort to celebrate Cesar Chavez Day, President Obama signed a presidential proclamation calling on all Americans to recognize the birth of one of America’s greatest champions of social justice by engaging in service.

During the Champions of Change event, White House officials will recognize the Champions’ hard work and lead a discussion about how to advance, expand and develop resources and partnerships that will continue to improve the lives of all Americas, including Latinos.

The Champions of Change program was created as an opportunity for the White House to feature individuals doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.

The event will be moderated by Lisa Garcia Quiroz, Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Vice President of Corporate Responsibility at Time Warner Inc., and Marco Davis, Deputy Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. The event is closed to press but will be live streamed on the White House website. To watch this event live, visit www.whitehouse.gov/live at 10:00 AM ET on March 31st. To learn more about the White House Champions of Change program and nominate a Champion, visit www.whitehouse.gov/champions.

**Khin Mai Aung, Director - Educational Equity Program, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
New York, NY**

Khin Mai Aung, JD, is the Director of the Educational Equity Program at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) in New York City, NY. AALDEF's Educational Equity Program advocates on issues such as bilingual education, language access, bias-based harassment, school discipline, post 9-11 and gang profiling, affirmative action, and school integration in kindergarten through 12th grade and higher education. Under Ms. Aung's direction, AALDEF launched the first National Asian American Education Advocates Network with affiliates across the country, and filed Supreme Court amicus briefs supporting affirmative action, school integration and English Language Learner rights. Among her most notable achievements for individual clients, Ms. Aung won reinstatement for three Massachusetts teachers fired after discriminatory English fluency testing, and overturned the suspension of an Iowa honors student who protested her misclassification as an English Language Learner. Previously, she was the Director of Policy and Civic Engagement at Youth Leadership Institute, a Staff Attorney at Asian Law Caucus, and an Associate at Morrison and Foerster. Ms. Aung is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley School of Law, and received her undergraduate degree from Georgetown University.

**Germain Castellanos, Program Director SHINE Educational Leadership Program
Waukegan, IL**

Germain Castellanos is Program Director for the SHINE Educational Leadership Program, a Workforce Development program serving over 300 at-risk youth at Waukegan High School since 2008 where the student population is over 70% Latino. Germain's commitment to service was first recognized when he was honored with the title of AmeriCorps member of the Year in 2005 for his service as a Youth Developer at Youth Conservation Corps in Waukegan and has continued through his founding of the SHINE Program. Germain's transition from being a recipient of services to a provider of services for at-risk youth earned him the Illinois Governor's Journey Award in 2008. The son of immigrants from Mexico, Germain also works to create change and opportunity for the residents of his home town of Waukegan by serving as Vice President of the Habitat for Humanity Lake County Board of Directors; Program Chair and Member of the Board of Directors for Youth Conservation Corps; and as Member of the Lake County Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council.

**Armando H. Chavez, Principal of Columbus Elementary School
Columbus, NM**

Armando Chavez serves as principal of Columbus Elementary School (Deming Public Schools) in Columbus, NM. The school serves a population in which 99% of the students enter as monolingual Spanish language students. Most of this unique group of students were born in the United States and live across the border in Mexico. During his tenure as the leader of the school, he has emphasized the importance of education. His vision is to unite two nations and two languages in order to produce productive citizens of the United States. His vision also includes giving them the tools needed to reach high levels of excellence and achievement. Biliteracy and bilingualism are at the forefront of his educational design for every student. He encourages teachers, students, and parents to form alliances which will enhance the opportunity for every child to succeed.

**Sandra Gutierrez, National Director of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
Los Angeles, CA**

Sandra Gutierrez is the National Program Director of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD), the nation's first, evidence-based comprehensive training program for Latino parents with children aged 0-5. Ms. Gutierrez led the development of the AP/OD program and curriculum, which is designed with parent input and uses the "popular education" approach to engage parents in lessons that authentically reflect their culture, communities and experiences. Since its launch in Los Angeles in 2007, AP/OD has trained over 1,000 facilitators in more than 400 family-serving organizations and has provided its curriculum to over 30,000 families in 256 cities across the country. Results from a 2012 independent evaluation demonstrate that participants make significant gains in parenting skills and knowledge, and become advocates for their children and families. Prior to joining Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, Ms. Gutierrez's expansive career included founding the first service organization to assist Central American Refugees, developing health education programs for agricultural workers, leading campaigns to promote preschool in the Latino community, and serving as State Commissioner for First 5 California.

**Helen Gym, Board Member, Asian Americans United
Philadelphia, PA.**

Helen Gym is a community and education leader whose work across different organizations supports the right to a quality public education for all children. A former school teacher and journalist, she leads the board of Asian Americans United, a 28-year old organization serving Philadelphia's diverse Asian American and immigrant communities. At AAU, she has organized against predatory gambling and led a campaign to address human rights issues in immigration and deportation practices. She helped found a Chinatown-based charter school serving many immigrant families and

anchored a successful federal civil rights case focused on the responsibility of adults to create safe school environments free from bias and harassment. She is a co-founder of Parents United for Public Education, a citywide parent group that has successfully advocated for millions of dollars in new revenue for Philadelphia public schools. She is a frequent writer and contributor in local media circles; helped establish the city's independent education newspaper, the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook*, as its first full-time editor; and is currently on the editorial board of *Rethinking Schools*, a social justice teaching journal.

**Nahla Kayali, Founder & Executive Director of Access California Services
Anaheim, CA**

Nahla Kayali serves as the Founder and Executive Director for Access California Services (AccessCal) in Anaheim, California. AccessCal is a health and human services non-profit culturally and linguistically competent family resource center dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for underserved Arab-American and Muslim-American communities. Under Ms. Kayali's leadership, the organization provides programs in 15 languages delivered by 30 staff including 10 AmeriCorps members. Programs include: health access in government programs including ObamaCare, employment services, citizenship and immigration services, mental health services, refugee support services, English as a Second Language and client advocacy. Ms. Kayali is described as a foot soldier for her community in making sure individuals and families receive access to quality services. Ms. Kayali serves on national and international boards including the Palestine Children Relief Fund, Community Action Partnership and the Orange County Food Bank. Ms. Kayali also serves as the Chairwoman of the Refugee Forum of Orange County and holds the State Refugee Forum Seat for the State Advisory Council on Refugee Assistance and Services.

**Herb Lee, Jr. Executive Director of the Pacific American Foundation
Kāne'ohe, HI**

Herb Lee, Jr. , is a Native Hawaiian that has led multiple and highly successful youth leadership programs, career planning and development, environmental education and culture-based curriculum projects including the award winning " Kāhea Loko and the Aloha 'Āina" projects . His programs have trained over 3,500 teachers and benefited over 70,000 students throughout the State of Hawaii spanning grade levels K to 12. PAF has been recognized as one of the leading non-profits in the development and training of rigorous culture-based education programs for both Native Hawaiians and non-Hawaiian students. He is one of the founders of the Waikalua Loko Fishpond Preservation Society in Kaneohe, O'ahu, a non-profit organization whose mission is education through the protection, preservation, restoration and perpetual stewardship

of an ancient (400 year old) cultural resource. He serves on numerous Boards and community groups and in 2011 was selected to the National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (NEJAC) Indigenous People Working Group and received the Historic Hawaii Foundation's highest Preservation Award for the work at the Waikalua Loko Fishpond.

**Xavier A. Munoz, AmeriCorps Member / ESOL Instructor with the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia
Alexandria, VA**

As an AmeriCorps member with the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, Xavier Munoz has been teaching English to adult immigrants and refugees in family literacy and beginning-level ESOL classes since September 2012. In addition to teaching full-time, he leads a staff task force to compile and design an online collection of instructional resources suitable for use with learners with low levels of English language proficiency. Raised in Tampa, Florida, and the younger son of two naturalized immigrants, he has a BA in Human Biology from Stanford University and plans to pursue an MA in TESOL in the near future. He started in adult education as a volunteer literacy tutor with I CAN Community Education Coalition in Tampa and came to Northern Virginia to foster that budding interest. He credits the adults in his classes and his experience serving with AmeriCorps for giving direction to his future and takes to heart the mission of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia to empower adults through English language instruction to "participate more fully and confidently in their communities". Although advancing from point A to point B comes from the students themselves, being a part of their journey convinces him of a teacher's potential to be a catalyst for change.

**Diego Uriburu, Executive Director for Identity, Inc.
Gaithersburg, MD**

Diego Uriburu is originally from Argentina, and has promoted the rights of Latino, immigrant, and LGBT communities in the Washington, D.C. area since immigrating to the U.S. In 1998, he co-founded Identity, Inc., a community-based organization in Montgomery County, Maryland, and serves as its Executive Director. Through his leadership, advocacy efforts, and coalitions established with the local government, school system, and businesses, Diego has worked determinedly to improve access to educational and employment opportunities for underserved immigrant youth. His dedication to excellence has helped establish Identity as an influential and trusted community resource, whose priorities are guided by research-based programs and advocacy that respond to the specific needs of the community Identity serves.

**Luis Urrieta, Jr., Coordinator of the Cultura en Acción (Culture in Action) After School Program
Austin, TX.**

Luis Urrieta, Jr., Ph.D. is the Associate Professor and Program Director for the Cultural Studies in Education Program at The University of Texas, Austin and Coordinator of the Cultura en Acción Culture in Action After School Program. He has dedicated his life and career to raising awareness about Latina/o community issues, especially immigrant, and indigenous communities. As the son of Mexican immigrants from rural Michoacán, his motivation for advocacy and work with communities stems from his family experiences dealing with the perceptions and often hostility toward immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants. His professional and academic work in Education has been dedicated to raising awareness and valuing Latina/o immigrant family and community knowledge as well as the importance of nourishing and supporting strong ethnic and linguistic identities in Latina/o children and youth, while promoting and creating the conditions for high academic achievement. Urrieta's advocacy has been primarily focused on mentoring, teaching, and cultivating leadership around critical issues in Latina/o education with youth as a former bilingual middle school teacher, with teachers as a teacher educator, and with undergraduate and graduate students through community workshops and internships, exchange programs abroad in Mexico and Guatemala, and through his local church. For the last two years, Urrieta, along with student volunteers, has also coordinated Cultura en Acción – Culture in Action a collaborative after school program for elementary school students that focuses on academic, self, and community empowerment along with integrating 21st Century skills and technology, while cultivating leadership skills.

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