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DAY OF THE DEAD / DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

Protestan en contra del Centro Hispano por no cumplir con los deportados del autobús

Por: Isabel Flores, Corresponsal La Prensa

Grand Rapids, MI. - Un pequeño grupo de personas protestaron en contra del Centro Hispano del Oeste de Michigan, ubicado en el 1204 de la avenida Grandville en esta ciudad, el pasado lunes a las 4:00pm, por el mal servicio que brinda a la comunidad hispana y por no cumplirle a las familias de los deportados del autobús que viajaba al Consulado de México en Detroit el pasado mes de Julio y que fue detenido por las autoridades de migración.

“No tuvimos la participación que esperábamos en la protesta, porque se usaron muchos medios para tratar de pararla, la iglesia no apoyo como esperábamos. Se intimidó a la gente diciéndoles que se cerraría el Centro Hispano y después no habrá nadie que apoye a la comunidad; pero yo no estoy diciendo que se cierre, lo que queremos es que pare la discriminación y el mal trato. Se está haciendo negocio con la gente, no deberían tener los precios tan altos y el personal debería ser más amablemente”, dijo en entrevista exclusiva para *La Prensa*, Luz Calvo, organizadora del evento.

Calvo aseguró que conoce gente que ha sufrido discriminación y negación de servicios por parte del Centro Hispano debido a su vestimenta o apariencia. “Las personas humildes son tratadas injustamente, en cambio los amigos y familiares reciben lo mejor. Nos gustaría que cambie el servicio, que traten a todos por igual. Sabemos que están recibiendo mucho dinero y queremos que sea repartido equitativamente”, agregó la organizadora.

Luz dice que algunos piensan que esto es algo personal; sin embargo como activista trabaja por el bien de la comunidad. “Cuando el Consulado de México vio el trabajo que estaba haciendo para ayudar a los muchachos de DACA a obtener su licencia, me ofreció darme citas especiales para llevarlos y tramitar sus documentos. Fue ahí que investigue y me di cuenta que con \$20 dólares que se cobre a cada persona se cubre el gasto del camión, no entiendo por qué el Centro Hispano cobra \$75, si aparte el Consulado le da dinero al Centro Hispano por cada persona que lleva”.

Cabe recordar que en el autobús con destino al Consulado de México en Detroit viajaban 47 mexicanos, de los cuales fueron detenidos tres por contar con antecedentes penales y posteriormente fueron deportados.



“Las familias quedaron desamparadas y la señora Martha (Directora del Centro Hispano) dijo que les ayudaría, pero nunca se contacto con ellos. Si tu estas a la cabeza de una organización que ayuda a la comunidad, lo menos que puedes hacer es tratar de compensar a estas familias. El Centro Hispano cuenta con los recursos pero no quiere ayudar”, destacó la organizadora de la protesta.

Asimismo, informó que “hace unas semanas nos reunimos con el Alcalde y ahí las tres esposas afectadas tuvieron la oportunidad de reclamarle directamente a la señora Martha, quien guardó silencio, pidió disculpas y prometió ayudar a dos de ellas; dijo que les ayudaría con la renta y los servicios básicos por un año, pero hasta ahora no ha cumplido. En esa reunión la directora del Centro Hispano tuvo el cinismo de decir que no se les ha proveído ayuda a las afectas porque ellas no la han querido.”

Al final de la protesta, Luz recogió algunas firmas para indemnizar a las tres familias afectadas, pero de acuerdo con ella, muchos no firmaron por miedo a represalias y que el Centro Hispano los deporta a ellos también.

Manifestaciones de apoyo

Al mismo tiempo que se llevaba a cabo esta protesta, un grupo de manifestantes acudieron con carteles de apoyo al Centro Hispano.

“Éramos como 15 personas que apoyamos porque nos parece injustificada la protesta. Es verdad que se cometió un error pero el Centro Hispano nos brindó asesoría y apoyo, al igual que el Consulado de México; nunca nos dejaron solos”, dijo una de las manifestantes quien prefirió no revelar su nombre.

Por su parte, en entrevistas previas, Martha

González-Cortes aseguró reiteradamente que el Centro Hispano está en la mejor disposición de ayudar a las familias; sin embargo algunas prefirieron contratar servicios de abogados particulares, lo cual impidió que se diera el seguimiento indicado. “A todos se les ofreció ayuda gratuita pero para los que optaron por un abogado particular quedamos fuera de la conversación. A menos que se acerquen a nosotros con mucho gusto podremos apoyarlos”, informó González-Cortes.

Cabe destacar que el Consulado de México ofreció a los tres detenidos que contaban con antecedentes penales, el servicio gratuito del abogado Cirilo Martínez, especialista en temas de inmigración; pero dos de ellos prefirieron contratar a otros abogados.

Al término de la manifestación, el Centro Hispano emitió el siguiente comunicado:

El Centro ha manejado las consecuencias de un viaje en autobús al Consulado de México en Detroit este julio. Durante ese viaje, el error del conductor de la empresa de autobuses causó que las autoridades de inmigración detuvieron el autobús, y tres de los 47 pasajeros fueron detenidos y ahora se enfrentan a los procedimientos de inmigración. El autobús no era propiedad del Centro y el conductor no era nuestro empleado.

Este incidente fue, y sigue siendo, muy difícil para todas las familias involucradas y afectadas, así como para el personal y la junta directiva del Centro Hispano. Es importante entender que el Centro, en consonancia con su misión de ayudar a los miembros de la comunidad Hispana/Latina en situaciones de riesgo, ha proporcionado importante ayuda a los pasajeros, que incluye:

- Trabajar con el Consulado de México,

que proporcionó un abogado de inmigración privado para aconsejar a los individuos detenidos sobre sus opciones y para representarlos durante los procedimientos si se desea

- Reunirse individualmente – y repetidamente – con las familias afectadas
- Asistencia de emergencia y de transición para estas familias
- Reunirse con todos los pasajeros del viaje en autobús para contestar preguntas y resolver problemas inmediatos.

Como organización de apoyo de la comunidad, apoyamos totalmente a los derechos de la Primera Enmienda de todas las personas a reunirse pacíficamente y expresar sus puntos de vista. Sin embargo, el Centro no está de acuerdo que tiene la culpa en este caso o que su reacción ha sido insuficiente. Hemos revisado cuidadosamente todas las solicitudes realizadas por los pasajeros y algunos miembros de la comunidad, y hemos tomado decisiones basadas en las políticas del Centro, varias reglas, y otras consideraciones que se aplican a una organización como el nuestro que recibe fondos federales y de fundaciones. Por razones de la privacidad de las personas a quienes servimos, no podemos dar más explicaciones públicas sobre las razones para decisiones particulares.

Seguimos abiertos a escuchar a las quejas particulares de individuos afectados por el viaje en autobús el 25 de julio o por cualquier otra razón. El Comité Ejecutivo de nuestra junta sigue reservando tiempo para reunirse con quien quiera enfrentarlo o para revisar los comentarios escritos de individuos. Como siempre, el Centro acoge y fomenta comentarios sobre nuestros servicios y funcionamiento.

Detroit Institute of Arts celebrates Mexican tradition of *Ofrenda* Altars

The *Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA)* celebrates the Mexican tradition of *ofrenda* altars with 10 installations by local artists and community members from Friday, Oct. 25, to Sunday, Nov. 3, 2013. The display coincides with the *Day of the Dead*, an annual celebration originating in Mexico, for families and friends to honor deceased loved ones.

Ofrenda altars are traditionally decorated with or-



nate sugar skulls, flowers and favorite foods, mementos and pictures of the deceased. In contemporary iterations, *ofrendas* have been created as a way to pay homage to not only people but also places, moments in time, ideas and events that people feel are worth commemorating.

Themes for the DIA

ofrendas range from pet memorials, to remembrances of unidentified migrants, to honoring Mexican-American veterans. The altars will be constructed, for example, from a variety of media, including found objects, silk, ceramics, animal bones, and seeds.

The selected participants have wide-ranging experiences and occupations—seasoned artists, teachers, students, veterans, and entrepreneurs. Many have designed *ofrendas* in the past for other museums, galleries, and community centers.

Gabrielle and *Juan Javier Pescador* of Ann Arbor have exhibited their *ofrendas* at the *National Museum of Mexican Art* in Chicago and *El Pueblo Historical Monument* in Los Angeles, among other places.

For the DIA, they will construct an *ofrenda* dedicated to the late *Detroit Tiger* third baseman *Aurelio Rodríguez* and his contributions to Latino communities across North America in the 1970s. Rodríguez was killed in a car accident in Detroit in 2000.

One altar will memorialize *Stephen Paul "Pablo" Davis*, the last living artist to assist *Diego Rivera* while the famed muralist was completing *Detroit Industry* at the DIA. It will feature a shirt and bolo tie that *Frida Kahlo* gave to Davis. Another *ofrenda* will exhibit self-portrait sugar skulls created by high school students from LaSalle, Ontario, for a senior project.

Museum visitors will also have the opportunity to honor figures in their community or personal history by writing a note of remembrance to place on an interactive community altar within the display.

Ofrenda artists will be available to discuss their creations with visitors on Nov. 3 at 2 p.m.

For more information about the artists contact Larisa Zade at lzade@dia.org.

Photo Credit:
Poster from *ofrenda* by *Gabrielle* and *Juan Javier Pescador*.



El Centro de la Mujer
[Donde la mujer es el Centro!]

También, los niños están bienvenidos.

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Explore the Mexican *Day of the Dead* tradition at Macomb Community College's Lorenzo Cultural Center

Macomb Community College has partnered with the Mexican Consulate (based in Detroit) to bring the *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) Celebration to the Lorenzo Cultural Center Oct. 30–Nov. 3, 2013. The celebration honors the deceased, employing exhibits, presentations, workshops, and films.

"We're pleased to partner with the Mexican Consulate...to bring the *Día de los Muertos* Celebration to the Lorenzo Cultural Center," said *Christine Guarino*, director, Cultural Affairs & Community Engagement, Macomb Community College.

The exhibits that will be on display are:

- *Day of the Dead*: Photographs by Michigan journalist and writer Jerry Morton featuring images taken in Mexico, from small towns to Mexico City, during Day of the Dead celebrations.

- *De la Cocina al Ojo* (From the Kitchen to the Eye): Photos taken between 1905 and 1940 that depict Hispanic eating places, kitchen, dining room or an improvised space, where people experience culture through food and make meals into art.

- *Altar Display*: Examples of altars and

elements of the traditional Day of the Dead offering, including flowers and candles.

"Day of the Dead is a festive holiday in which families celebrate the lives of their relatives who have died," said *María Ramos*, professor, Spanish and international studies, Macomb Community College. "A huge part of the celebration is the creation of an *ofrenda*, or altar, that features items representing the deceased – favorite foods, a photo, personal items, candles and flowers. Altars are a traditional remembrance that families create to welcome their loved ones home on *Día de los Muertos*."

Highlights of the celebration at the Lorenzo Cultural Center include:

- *Remembrance: An Altar-Making Workshop*, Wednesday, Oct. 30, from 12–1 p.m., and Thursday, Oct. 31, from 10–11 a.m. Professor Ramos leads the workshop. Limited supplies will be provided, but participants should bring a photo of the family member for whom they will create the altar.

- *An Altar for a Friend*, Wednesday, Oct. 30 from 2–3:30 p.m. *Gary Flemming*, Ph.D., Macomb professor of international

studies and Latin American culture, discusses the tradition of altar making, explaining each of the elements necessary for an altar and sharing artifacts he uses each year to create a personal altar for someone he has lost.

- *Food for the Ancestors*, Thursday, Oct. 31 from 12–1 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 3 from 2–3 p.m. A film that features Day of the Dead celebrations in Puebla, Mexico, highlighting traditions that include mask dancing, artisans creating skull artwork and the eating of Mexican meat grasshoppers, ant eggs, and mosquitoes.

- *Tamalada: Making Tamales*, Thursday, Oct. 31 from 2–3 p.m. Macomb Community College culinary arts instructor *Chef Scott O'Farrell* showcases this traditional Mexican food that is placed on altars and eaten during Day of the Dead celebrations.

- *Las Momias: The Accidental Mummies of Guanajuato*, Saturday, Nov. 2 from 1–2 p.m. This film shows the range of customs surrounding death in Mexico, from pre-Columbian times through today. *Mary Meier*, Macomb professor of anthropology and archeology, will facilitate a Q&A following the film.

All events are free, but preregistration is required and can be made by calling 586.445.7348 or going online to www.Lorenzo-CulturalCenter.com. The Lorenzo Cultural Center is located on Macomb Community College's Center Campus, Garfield and M-59, Clinton Township.



Día de los Muertos Celebration at the Lorenzo Cultural Center

Exhibits, Presentations, Films and Workshops

Date: Wednesday, Oct. 30 – Sunday, Nov. 3

Time: Wednesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m.

Cost: Free

Parking: Free

Registration: www.LorenzoCulturalCenter.com

About the Lorenzo Cultural Center

The Lorenzo Cultural Center (www.Lorenzo-CulturalCenter.com) explores the influences and experiences that shape our community's heritage, examining topics from a variety of perspectives and creating interactive opportunities for learning, celebration and entertainment. Located on Macomb Community College's Center Campus, Hall and Garfield Roads in Clinton Township, the cultural center is adjacent to the Macomb Center for Performing Arts.



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Jam session inspires 3rd, 4th graders

On Monday, October 14, more than 200 3rd and 4th graders from *Academy of the Americas* in Detroit and *Novi Woods Elementary School* in Novi gathered for a "Global Jam" led by the unique New York-based ensemble *Classical Jam*. Students got acquainted as they learned how to listen and respond to each other using basics of musical rhythm and melody from diverse world cultures to create a jam session.

The jam session was part of a day-long program presented by the *Chamber Music Society of Detroit* in partnership with *Bridgepointe*. A

Detroit-based non-profit charitable organization, *Bridgepointe* brings together school children from cities and suburbs, bridging different cultures and backgrounds through shared experiences, and enhancing understanding among partnering schools and communities. The event was held at the *Academy of the Americas*.

This session was part of the *Chamber Music Society of Detroit's* 2013-14 *Discovery Series*. Following these live sessions, students from participating schools will remain in touch during the school year through *Skype* and email.

Native American Matt Wesaw becomes director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights

Lansing, Oct. 18, 2013: The *Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC)* today announced that *Matt Wesaw* will begin his tenure as Executive Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) on Monday, October 28, 2013. The Commission selected Wesaw at their Oct. 7 meeting in Lansing, filling the vacancy left by the retirement of previous MDCR Executive Director *Daniel Krichbaum* in July. Wesaw will be based at the department's Lansing office in the Capital Tower Building at 110 West Michigan Avenue.



Matt Wesaw

"Matt Wesaw brings a depth and breadth of experience and sound judgment that will be of great benefit to the Department of Civil Rights and the state of Michigan," said *Governor Rick Snyder*. "I look forward to joining with him in the important work of ensuring that every citizen of this great state has the opportunity to live, work, and learn in an environment free from discrimination, ready to pursue the opportunities around them."

With his selection, Wesaw will become the first Native American to lead the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Wesaw plans to retire from his current positions as Chairman of the *Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians* and president and CEO of the *Pokagon Gaming Authority* prior to his start with MDCR.

"I feel very privileged and honored to have been selected as Executive Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights," said Wesaw. "Civil Rights is an area that I am very passionate about and I'm excited to focus on it in the final phase of my career."

Wesaw began his career in public service in 1979 when he joined the Michigan State Police. During his 26 years as a state trooper, Wesaw served at the Jackson Post, Flat Rock Post, and Lansing Post prior to being promoted to uniform sergeant in 1986.

He was then transferred to the Criminal Investigation Division, where he became Detective Sergeant and served in the Organized Crime and Auto Theft Units. In 1995, Wesaw became Vice President of the Michigan State Police Troopers Association (MSPTA), serving in that role until January of 2001, and as the Director of Government Relations for MSPTA until his retirement in March of 2008.

Wesaw served as a tribal council member, vice chairman and past chairman of

the federally-recognized *Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians*. He also served as chairman of the Commission on Indian Affairs under Governor *John Engler*. Wesaw was appointed by Governor *Engler* to the *Community Service Commission*.

In 2004, Governor *Jennifer Granholm* appointed Wesaw to the *Michigan Civil Rights Commission*, becoming only the second Native American to hold that position. He served as Chair of the Commission in 2010 and 2011.

In 2007, Wesaw was hired by the Board of Directors of the *United Tribes of Michigan* which is comprised of the federally-recognized tribes in Michigan whose mission is to support the mutual interests of the Native American community. He served in this position until his election as Tribal Chairman of the *Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians* in 2009.

Wesaw also serves as the president and CEO of the *Pokagon Gaming Authority*, the governing body that oversees the *Four Winds Casinos*. In 2009, Wesaw was elected by the leaders of the Midwest's 37 federally-recognized tribes to the position of Area Vice-President of the *National Congress of American Indians*, and in 2010 he was selected to the position of *Recording Secretary* for *NCAI*.

In January of 2011, Wesaw was appointed by Governor *Snyder* to the *Council on Law Enforcement and Reinvention* committee. The committee is charged with evaluating the efficiency of the delivery of law enforcement services to the citizens of the state of Michigan.

The MDCR Executive Director is responsible for implementing public policy set forth by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, including providing executive leadership for MDCR and its employees. MDCR is responsible for civil rights complaint investigations as well as outreach efforts and educational programs to promote voluntary compliance with civil rights laws.

It is also home to the *Michigan Women's Commission*, the *Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan*, the *Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission*, the *Council on Arab and Chaldean American Affairs*, and the *Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing*.

For more information on the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, go to www.michigan.gov/mdcr.

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