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## Beck Center celebrates Hispanic Heritage

*Arooj Ashraf, La Prensa Correspondent*

Beck Center for the Arts in Lakewood is featuring a vibrant exhibition of work by local Latino artists to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. The opening reception on Sept. 14, 2012 launched the month long exhibition featuring prominent artists:

Augusto Bordellos, Bruno Casiano, Hector Castellanos, María Dejesús Paz, Gabriel González, Angelica Pozo, María Pujana, Alejandro Rivera, Dante Rodríguez, Bess Rodríguez Richard, Will Sánchez, José Vásquez, and Hector Vega.



*Susan Gallagher, Mari Galinada DaSilva, Dr. Maria Pujana, and Cindy Einhouse*

The featured exhibit includes prints, graphic design, photography, sculpture, and Pre-Columbian artifact replica jewelry. *Cindy Einhouse*, President of the Beck Center, described the exhibition as one of the most colorful and vibrant featured at the Center. She said the Center is committed to expanding its collaborations and cultural diversity through participation and exhibits. Along with supporting and highlighting the work of Latino artists who paint a vivid mélange of talent, an ongoing partnership has been established with *Esperanza Inc.*, Cleveland.

*Ed Gallagher*, Director of Education at the Beck Center, said all children should have access to creative outlets, and the programs allow youth to explore mediums through music, theatre, drawing, and sculpture. *Arts As A Peaceful Solution* is a one-day program funded by the National Education Association. Schools organize field-trips to the Beck Center and spend several hours immersed in various art forms that they choose. Gallagher said expression through art adds a dimension of communication and an outlet that children may not be used to but develop strength in.

"They can use the concepts of using art in personal conflict resolution, preventing bullying or expressing themselves," he said. Collaboration with *Esperanza* expands the reach of the program and services and Gallagher hopes enrich opportunities for the youth, "We have focused on the gifted students but there is a whole spectrum of others who can appreciate the arts."

*Gallagher* said in a previous seminar, youth created superheroes and discussed why their special powers were unique. The program is extensive; it provides the traditional and contemporary outlets from visual arts, pottery to hip-hop dancing. He added the arts help youth with more than just expression of thought but create a sense of worth when their work is displayed, recognized, and appreciated.

Nearly 150 students from *Esperanza* will participate in the program. Along-side the opening reception for the established artists, students from *Esperanza* displayed their masks, handprints, and design work they created during a summer program with *STEM Academy* and *American Greetings*.

*Kristina Haddad*, *Esperanza* program coordinator, said attendance was always the highest the day students were expected to visit *American Greetings*. "This truly gave the kids a voice, helped them relate to their peers," she said.

Haddad added the middle school students were thrilled to be featured at the same time as the established artists and talk to them about their ideas. "They cannot wait to be back," she said. For many students, this was their first chance to meet a professional artist and to understand some of the creative opportunities that the work-world offers.

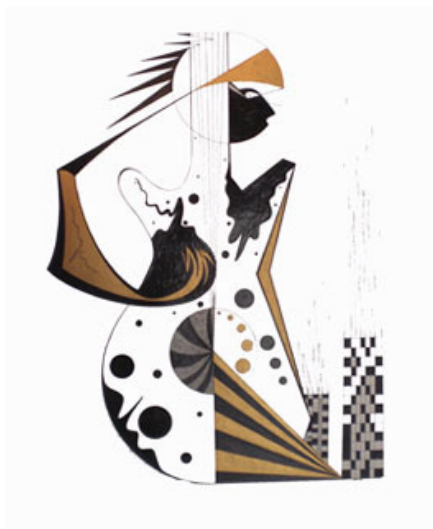
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*Cardio Art from Jose3*



*Esperanza collage*



*Que Cante Mi Hente by Gabriel Gonzalez*



*Some of the participating artists*

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