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AN AMAZED FEELING

Un increíble sentimiento



Tony Becerra, one of the original Freedom Writers, shared his high school stories with ninth grade students at Turner High School.

Tony Becerra, uno de los originales Escritores de la Libertad, compartió sus historias de la secundaria con los estudiantes del noveno grado de la Secundaria Turner.

DEBRA DECOSTER
HISPANIC NEWS

TRADUCE PATRICIO H. LAZEN
HISPANIC NEWS

Students today can pound on a computer keyboard or text on a cell phone with ease, but when it comes to the basics of reading, writing and mathematics, there is much room for improvement. Marlee Stempleman, a ninth-grade English teacher at Turner High School, knew her students

Los estudiantes de hoy en día pueden darle al teclado de una computadora o enviar mensajes textuales en un teléfono celular con facilidad, pero cuando se trata de lo básico de la lectura, de la escritura y de las matemáticas, allí hay mucho más espacio para mejorar. Marlee

TONY BECERRA/PAGE 6

TONY BECERRA/PÁGINA 6

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE Dando un paso adelante



García Elementary students embraced the qualities they most admired in their hero, former baseball umpire Steve Palermo — compassion, generosity and a willingness to listen.

Estudiantes de García acogieron las cualidades que ellos admiran más en su héroe, el árbitro de béisbol Steve Palermo: compasión, generosidad y una disposición a escuchar sus historias.

MARY SPENCER
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICT

TRADUCE PATRICIO H. LAZEN
HISPANIC NEWS

Why do kids need heroes? "You kids are more gifted and creative than you give yourselves credit for," said visiting former umpire Steve Palermo when presented with a biography and a ballad composed by García Elementary students in his honor. The sixth and second grades had studied

¿Porqué los niños necesitan héroes? "Sus niños son más prodigios y creativos que lo que ustedes mismos se los reconocen", dijo el ex árbitro de béisbol Steve Palermo cuando le presentaron una biografía y una balada compuesta en su honor por estudiantes de la escuela Elemental García.

"YOU HUMBLE ME"/PAGE 4

"USTEDES ME"/PÁGINA 4

A DAY OF HONOR Un día de honor



JOE ARCE AND DEBRA DECOSTER
HISPANIC NEWS

Memorial Day is a national holiday, a time to honor the fallen men and women of all wars. It is a day on which families and war veterans visit cemeteries and place wreaths and American flags at the graves of veterans. It is a day to reflect on the sacrifices that were made on the battlefields so Americans could be free.

Families celebrate Memorial Day with picnics and family barbecues. Local swimming pools open and families head for the lake over the three-day weekend; it is the official sign that summer has arrived. As we raise our next generation, are we teaching our children the reasons behind the national holiday?

Rudy Padilla, commander of the local chapter of the American GI Forum, said he hopes the next generation will continue to honor war veterans of past and present. "We (American GI Forum) make sure that our members and even our youth are involved in activities for Memorial Day and Veterans Day," he said.

Memorial Day originally was known as Decoration Day because it was a time set aside to honor the nation's Civil War dead by decorating their graves. It was first observed on May 30, 1868, to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers, by proclamation of Gen. John Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic.

THE DAY IS /PAGE 2



Rudy Padilla, commander of the local chapter of the American GI Forum, has participated during the past several years in local events. In the Cinco de Mayo parade, he and members of the GI Forum hoped their presence reminded people that Hispanics have served and continue to serve in the armed forces. Memorial Day also is a time to honor those serving in combat, including Amando Rodriguez, who recently returned home from Iraq.

Rudy Padilla, comandante del anexo local del Forum American GI, ha participado a lo largo de varios de los pasados años en eventos locales. En la parada del Cinco de Mayo, él y miembros del Foro de los GI llevaron la esperanza de que su presencia le recordaría a la gente que los hispanos han servido y continúan sirviendo en las fuerzas armadas. El Memorial Day (Día para Recordar) es también un día para rendirle homenaje a aquellos que sirven en zonas de combate, incluyendo a Armando Rodríguez, quien recientemente regresó a casa desde Irak.

TRADUCE PATRICIO H. LAZEN
HISPANIC NEWS

reflexionar sobre los sacrificios hechos en los campos de batalla para que los estadounidenses pudieran ser libres.

El Memorial Day (Día para Recordar) es un feriado nacional, un día para recordar a los hombres y mujeres caídos en todas las guerras. Es un día en el cual las familias y los veteranos de las guerras visitan los cementerios y ponen coronas de flores y banderas estadounidenses en las tumbas de los veteranos. Es un día para

La familias celebran el Memorial Day con meriendas en el campo y barbacoas familiares. Las piscinas locales son abiertas y las familias se dirigen al lago para disfrutar del fin de semana de tres días; es la señal oficial de que el verano ha arribado. Pero mientras nosotros criamos a nuestra próxima genera-

EL DIA ES /PÁGINA 2

A CULTURAL APPROACH TO FAMILY VIOLENCE TREATMENT Un Enfoque Cultural al Tratamiento para la Violencia Familiar

JOE ARCE AND DEBRA DECOSTER
HISPANIC NEWS

TRADUCE PATRICIO H. LAZEN
HISPANIC NEWS

Domestic violence affects families of all ethnic and economic backgrounds. Domestic violence is a disease that happens behind closed doors, from affluent communities to low income communities, and in both spaces the victims hide their scars of violence from the outside world.

The rise of domestic violence cases within the Latino communities has impacted the work of Iberty Gedeon, clinical director at Mattie Rhodes. She has decided that it is time that members of the community and local social service agencies address the issue and help the families in crisis.

The Mattie Rhodes Center is hosting a program by Dr. Ricardo Carrillo, PhD, and author of Family Violence and Men of Color: Healing the Wounded Male Spirit, on Tuesday, May 26 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Southeast Community Center, 3601 E. 63rd Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

Dr. Carrillo is a renowned speaker and psychologist with years of experience working with Latino males who have been involved in domestic violence.

CARRILLO SAYS/PAGE 3

La violencia doméstica afecta a familias de todas las procedencias étnicas y económicas. La violencia doméstica es una enfermedad que ocurre a puertas cerradas, desde afluentes comunidades a comunidades de bajos ingresos y en ambos espacios las víctimas le esconden al mundo exterior las cicatrices de la violencia.

El alza en casos de violencia doméstica dentro de las comunidades latinas ha tenido un impacto en el trabajo de Iberty Gedeon, directora clínica de Mattie Rhodes. Ella ha decidido que es momento de que los miembros de la comunidad y las agencias locales de servicios sociales traten el problema y ayuden a las familias en crisis.

El Centro Mattie Rhodes está sirviendo de anfitrión a un programa del Dr. Ricardo Carrillo, PhD y autor de Violencia Familiar y Hombres de Color: Sanando el Herido Espíritu Masculino, que se realizará el martes 26 de mayo desde las 11 a.m. a las 2 p.m. en el Centro Comunitario Southwest, ubicado en el 3601 del Este de la calle 63 en Kansas City, Missouri.



Dr. Ricardo Carrillo is hoping for a consensus and for a safer community.

Dr. Ricardo Carrillo espera un consenso por una comunidad más segura.

CARRILLO DICE/PÁGINA 3

'The day is special to us'

CONT./PAGE 1

During the first celebration of Decoration Day, Gen. James Garfield delivered a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, after which 5,000 participants helped to decorate the graves of the more than 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried in the cemetery.

The tradition continues today as Veterans' organizations visit local cemeteries to place American flags at the graves of fallen soldiers. This year will be the 57th year for a Memorial Day service conducted by the American GI Forum at Emerson Park, 29th and Strong Avenue, in the Argentine neighborhood. The service will begin at 11 a.m. followed by a social brunch.

"The day is special to us because back when our ancestors, our uncles and dads who came back from the war, they were still treated as second- and third-class citizens. It is our way of honoring them," Rick Saucedo, a Vietnam War veteran, told *Hispanic News*.

Saucedo and Padilla have been working on the day's activities, hoping to instill in the younger generations a sense of patriotism. "I am thankful for our way of life and that in large part is because of our military heroes throughout all the wars in the United States past. I am especially thankful to all of our Hispanic veterans. Hispanics have fought in every war the United States has been involved in starting with the Revolutionary War," said Padilla.

Padilla gives talks to members of the community about the contributions that Hispanic war veterans have made to the United States. He knows firsthand what it means for a family

to make sacrifices for freedom. He has lost relatives during different wars.

"I lost two cousins and a nephew in Vietnam. I just can't help but recall how traumatic that was and how it affected their parents," said Padilla.

He thinks of his cousin, Raymond Mora, a 1967 graduate of Bishop Ward High School, who at the age of 19 decided to join the Marines to avoid being drafted into service. "I think of him often and especially at Memorial Day. He was 19 years old and had only been in Vietnam for two months when he lost his life," he said.

When men and women enter the military, they take an oath stating that they solemnly swear to support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Military personnel stand as patriots to defend and protect the ideals and sentiments expressed in the Constitution. It is their belief in their country that lead Hispanic men and women to enter the service and to defend and protect their loved ones and their country. It is their patriotism that Padilla hopes generations of Americans do not forget.

"We don't seem to have the patriotism we use to have. I just feel that a lot of our teachers, our professors in college are not veterans, they have never served in the military and I just really feel that that has affected our way of life. We are distracted by all the other things that go on in the United States, we have television with all these channels devoted to sports, open a newspaper and the largest section is sports. I love sports myself but I think it is taking over America's life and we are not thinking

of what actually has been a big strong point and that point has been the ability to protect itself and build a bond abroad," said Padilla.

But across the United States, there is evidence of changing attitudes toward veterans. In airports, where many veterans returning home encounter the public, there are signs of appreciation. Some veterans have said they have received money from strangers; others have been given free meals and even upgrades on their flights from airline employees.

Arthur Balandran, a retired Army veteran who served for 24 years as a combat medic, said Memorial Day should remind all Americans, regardless of whether they served, that freedom is not free. "It has been paid for by millions and millions of men and women who served our country."

Balandran, who lives in Topeka, said, "When I'm standing in the cemetery and see all the American flags next to the gravesites of the veterans, I take a moment of silence and I say 'thank you and God bless you.'"

He said he thinks of his father on Memorial Day who served in the South Pacific during World War II and who died in January 2000.

"It seems like every year, there are more and more American flags being placed on the graves because more and more veterans are dying. World War II veterans are dying and veterans from Korea and Vietnam. Now, we have the young men and women who are fighting in the Iraqi war and the Afghanistan war and they too are coming home and being buried."

Balandran said the sacrifice for freedom has no racial bar-

riers. "Our freedom has been paid for by whites, blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, anyone who has served our country honorably, regardless of their backgrounds. They committed themselves and took an oath to defend this country at all costs, knowing that it might even cost them their lives. And today more women of all races are making that same sacrifice than in any previous conflict. ... They are laying down their lives as well, and we need to respect them equally."

With the growing wave of younger veterans returning home, Saucedo said he hopes to entice the younger generation to join the activities of their local veterans organizations. He understands how some veterans might think such groups are for the older generations of veterans, but Saucedo wants to change that view so they can remember their fallen comrades.

"When my uncle asked me to join his veterans organization, I would say no it is nothing but old timers there and a couple years later I began thinking that if I don't join, then no other young people will join. I would like to see young veterans come out of the woodwork and put more life into these organizations," he said.

Most veterans would like to see the stories of the Hispanic war veteran continue into the next generation. Padilla speaks about how Hispanics were heroes in the war, but came back home to the United States, as decorated war heroes but were still treated as second- and third-class citizens. He is proud of the work the American GI Forum has done and continues today to keep the memories of the veterans alive by honoring them on this Memorial Day and on Veterans Day.



Amando Rodríguez is among the many Americans fighting to protect the nation's freedom. He and his family are proud to serve their country and at the same time are remembering those still in combat zones.

Amando Rodríguez se encuentra entre los muchos estadounidenses que combaten para proteger la libertad de la nación. Él y su familia están orgullosos de servirle a su país y al mismo tiempo recordar a aquellos que aún se encuentran en zonas de combate.

la Segunda Guerra Mundial y quien falleció en enero del 2000.

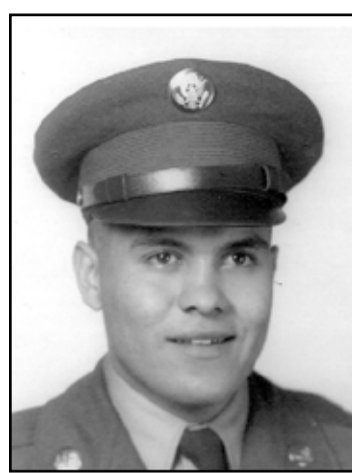
"Pareciera que cada año, hay más y más banderas estadounidenses puestas en las tumbas, ya que más y más veteranos están falleciendo. Los veteranos de la Segunda Guerra Mundial están muriendo y los veteranos de Corea y Vietnam. Ahora, tenemos a los hombres y mujeres jóvenes que están combatiendo en las guerras de Irak y de Afganistán y ellos también están regresando a casa y siendo sepultados."

Balandrán dice que el sacrificio por la libertad no tiene barreras raciales. "Nuestra libertad ha sido pagada por blancos, afro-estadounidenses, hispanos, nativos-americanos, por cualquiera que haya servido a nuestro país honorablemente, sin importar sus procedencias. Ellos se comprometieron a sí mismos y tomaron un juramento para defender a este país a toda costa, sabiendo que incluso ello pudiera costarle sus vidas. Y hoy en día más mujeres de todas las razas están haciendo el mismo sacrificio que en cualquier otro conflicto previo. ... Ellas también están ofreciendo sus vidas y nosotros tenemos que respetarlas de la misma manera."

Con la creciente ola de jóvenes veteranos regresando a casa, Saucedo dice que espera atraer a la generación joven a



FROM RUDY PADILLA



Frankie Sanchez was a casualty of the Vietnam War.

Frankie Sanchez fue una de las víctimas de la guerra de en Vietnam.

One of America's most haunting past military battles would likely be the Vietnam War. When I hear the song "More Than a Name on A Wall" by the Statler Brothers, I am reminded of our brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces. The first few lyrics of the song are: "I saw her from a distance as she walked up to the wall in her hand she held some flowers as her tears began to fall. She took out pen and paper as to trace her memories. She looked up to Heaven and the words she said were these. She said, Lord, my boy was special and he meant so much to me, and oh I'd love to see him just one more time you see. All I have are the memories and the moments to recall so Lord could you tell him he's more than a name on a wall."

My cousin, Frankie Sanchez was a casualty of the Vietnam War. He was an extraordinary young man. As the others, he obeyed orders and gave it his all before his life was cut short. I, along with family attended funeral services for his mother in Dodge City, Kan., almost two years ago. I remember my aunt Marcelina as always being very pleasant and she always made us feel welcome when we visited Western Kansas. The loss of her son in 1966 in my opinion gave her a sadness that could never go away.

It was always a joy when I visited Dodge City or my cousins visited us in Kansas City, Kan., in the 50s. Cousins Lena, David and Frankie were always fun to visit with. David was my age and liked adventure. Even though Frankie was 2 years older, he always liked to talk to younger kids to get them to speak up. He was like an older brother to me. Recently after I requested some material about Frankie from his sister Lena, she sent me several newspaper clippings from the Dodge City Globe. The publication of Wednesday, March 9, 1966, had the headline, "Mass Conducted For First Local Viet Nam Fatality." The Mass was at Out Lady of Guadalupe Church, where Frankie had served as an altar boy. During the sermon, the Rev. Leonard Burghart spoke of responsibili-

unirse a las actividades de sus organizaciones locales de veteranos. Él entiende cómo algunos veteranos pudieran pensar que grupos tales como esos son para la generación más antigua de veteranos, pero Saucedo quiere cambiar ese punto de vista para que ellos puedan recordar a sus camaradas caídos.

"Cuando mi tío me pidió que me uniera a su organización de veteranos, yo solía decirle que no y que eso era nada más que para la gente de otro tiempo, pero unos pocos años más tarde comencé a pensar que si no me unía, entonces ningún otro joven se uniría. Me gustaría ver que veteranos jóvenes salgan de su anonimato y le pongan más vida a estas organizaciones", dijo él.

A la mayoría de los veteranos les gustaría ver que las historias de los veteranos hispanos de las guerras continuaran en la próxima generación. Padilla comenta cómo los hispanos fueron héroes en la guerra, pero que regresaron a casa en EE.UU., como condecorados héroes de la guerra y aún así fueron tratados

as. He said "Our boys died in vain, when our citizens at home will not take up the torch of liberty and justice — and minority groups are denied the very rights our boys are asked to defend on the battlefield."

The history of the Sanchez family was one of service. Frankie's dad and three uncles all served in World War II and his other uncle was badly wounded in the Korean War. He was a good brother to his only sister Lena and younger brother, David.

He would serve in the Kansas National Guard for a year then would switch over to the regular Army. He had 10 continuous years of active service in the Army. He was a gunner as part of a helicopter crew — 1st Air Mobile Unit, Co. A1st Cavalry Division. He was to fly back to the states, but he lost his life the day before on Feb. 23, 1966. He was the first casualty of Dodge City in Vietnam.

His loss was deeply felt by all who knew him. According to the newspaper headline later in the month, his loss was also a wake-up call to many. The title "Dodge City War Impact Reviewed" followed a copyrighted story in the Wall Street Journal of March 24, 1966. This story reviewed the effect of the Vietnam War on the 14,000 residents of Dodge City.

"In interviews with scores of residents, reporter Everett Groseclose found that Our Lady of Guadalupe church was packed for the funeral of Frank Sanchez, a victim of the war. College students contributed double the quota of blood at St. Mary of the Plains College, aided by Dodge City Junior College; and youth are working harder to stay in colleges in hopes of avoiding the draft."

On July 1, 1965, the 1st Brigade (Airborne) of the 1st Cavalry Division was no longer a conventional infantry unit, but had become an air assault division. Frankie Sanchez was a part of the new 1st Cavalry Division. I am proud of him. He will always be in the thoughts of his family and the Air Cavalry at <http://www.allthewaybrigade.com/> — scroll down to "Our Fallen Comrades" — click on January — March 1966 — under "YOU ARE REMEMBERED" — Killed in Action date 02/23 — Sanchez Frankie SP4 A Co 1st Bn/12th Cav.

His sister, Lena remembers him as a loving person who left Dodge City as a very young man. The U.S. Army was an option for his later earning a college education. There were no employment opportunities for him in his home town — then he would spend many years away from his home in western Kansas. She remembers the family trauma on learning of his death in Vietnam and then the loneliness that was felt after he was gone.

'El día es especial para nosotros'

CONT./PÁGINA 1

eración, ¿Le estamos enseñando a nuestros niños las razones tras este feriado nacional?

Rudy Padilla, comandante del anexo local del Forum American GI, dijo que espera que la próxima generación continúe honrando a los veteranos de las guerras del pasado y del presente. "Nosotros (El Foro de los American GI) nos aseguramos de que nuestros miembros e incluso nuestra juventud participen en actividades del Memorial Day y del Día de los Veteranos", dijo él.

Originalmente el Memorial Day era conocido como el Día de las Condecoraciones ya que era un día apartado para honrar a los muertos de que cayeron en la Guerra Civil de la nación y era un día en que se decoraban sus tumbas. El día fue celebrado por primera vez el 30 de mayo de 1868, para conmemorar los sacrificios hechos por los soldados de la Guerra Civil y el cual fue proclamado por el General John Logan del Gran Ejército de la República.

Durante la primera celebración del Día de las Condecoraciones, el General James Garfield entregó un discurso en el Cementerio Nacional de Arlington, en donde a continuación 5,000 participantes ayudaron a decorar las tumbas de más de 20,000 soldados de la Unión y Confederados sepultados en el cementerio.

La tradición continúa hoy en día con las visitas por parte de organizaciones de veteranos a los cementerios locales para poner banderas estadounidenses en las tumbas de los soldados caídos. Esta será la versión No. 57 de un servicio para el Memorial Day conducido por el American GI Forum en el Parque Emerson, ubicado en la calle 29 y la Avenida Strong del vecindario Argentino. El servicio comenzará a las 11 a.m. y será seguido por un desayuno-almuerzo social.

"El día es especial para nosotros porque en los tiempos de nuestros ancestros, de nuestros tíos y papás que regresaban de la guerra, ellos aún eran tratados como ciudadanos de segunda y

tercera clase. Esta es nuestra manera de rendirles homenaje", Rick Saucedo, un Veterano de la Guerra de Vietnam, le dijo a *Hispanic News*.

Saucedo y Padilla han estado trabajando en las actividades del día, esperando inculcarle a las generaciones jóvenes un sentido de patriotismo. "Estoy agradecido por nuestra manera de vivir y eso se debe en gran parte a nuestros héroes militares a lo largo de todas las guerras en el pasado de Los Estados Unidos. Yo estoy especialmente agradecido de todos nuestros veteranos hispanos. Los hispanos han combatido en cada guerra que EE.UU. ha participado, comenzando con la Guerra Revolucionaria", dijo Padilla.

Padilla le habla a los miembros de la comunidad sobre las contribuciones que los veteranos hispanos de las guerras han hecho por Los Estados Unidos. Él sabe por experiencia propia lo que significa para una familia hacer sacrificios en pos de la libertad. Él ha perdido familiares en diferentes guerras.

"Perdí a dos primos y a un sobrino en Vietnam. "Simplemente no puedo evitar recordar lo traumático que ello fue y cómo afectó a sus padres", dijo Padilla.

Él piensa en su primo, Raymond Mora, un graduado de la clase de 1967 en la Secundaria Bishop Ward, quien a la edad de 19 decidió unirse a la Infantería de Marina para evitar ser enrolado en el servicio. "Pienso en él a menudo y especialmente durante el Memorial Day. Él tenía 19 años y había estado en Vietnam por sólo dos meses cuando perdió su vida", dijo él.

Cuando los hombres y mujeres entran a las Fuerzas Armadas, ellos hacen un juramento en el que solemnemente juran apoyar y defender la Constitución de Los Estados Unidos en contra de todos los enemigos, extranjeros y nacionales. Los miembros del personal militar se alzan como patriotas para defender y proteger las ideas y sentimientos expresados en la Constitución. Es el creer en su país lo que lleva a hombres y mujeres hispanos a entrar al servicio y a defender y proteger a sus seres queridos y a su país.

Es su patriotismo lo que Padilla espera que generaciones de estadounidenses no olviden.

"Nosotros parecíamos no tener el patriotismo que solíamos tener. Simplemente siento que muchos de nuestros maestros, nuestros profesores en las universidades no son veteranos, ellos nunca han servido en las fuerzas armadas y verdaderamente siento que eso ha afectado nuestra manera de vivir. Nosotros estamos siendo distraídos por todas las otras cosas que suceden en EE.UU., tenemos un sistema de televisión con todos esos canales dedicados a los deportes, abran un periódico y la sección más extensa es la de los deportes. Yo adoro los deportes, pero creo que están tomando control sobre la vida de EE.UU. y no estamos pensando cuál ha en realidad ha sido un punto fuerte y ese punto ha sido la habilidad para protegerse a sí mismo y construir lazos en el extranjero", dijo Padilla.

Pero a lo largo y ancho de EE.UU., existe evidencia de un cambio de actitud hacia los veteranos. En los aeropuertos, en donde muchos veteranos que regresan a casa se encuentran con el público, hay allí muestras de aprecio. Algunos veteranos han dicho haber recibido dinero de manos de extraños; a otros les han dado comidas gratis e incluso les han dado mejores acomodaciones en sus vuelos de parte de empleados de las aerolíneas.

Arthur Balandrán, un veterano jubilado del Ejército quien sirvió por 24 años como enfermero de combate, dijo que el Memorial Day debería recordarle a todos los estadounidenses, sin importar dónde hayan servido, que la libertad no es gratis. "Ha sido pagada por millones y millones de hombres y mujeres que han servido a nuestro país."

Balandrán, quien vive en Topeka, dijo, "Cuando estoy en el cementerio y observo todas las banderas estadounidenses junto a las tumbas de los veteranos, tomo un momento de silencio y digo 'gracias y que Dios los bendiga'."

Él dice que en el Memorial Day piensa en su padre quien sirvió en el Pacífico Sur durante



COMO YO LO VEO

TRADUCE PATRICIO H. LAZEN
HISPANIC NEWS

Uno de los pasados conflictos militares más evocadores de los estados Unidos sería la Guerra de Vietnam. Cuando escucho la canción "Más Que un Nombre en una Pared" de los Hermanos Statler, me hace recordar a nuestros bravos hombres y mujeres de las Fuerzas Armadas de EE.UU., las primeras frases en la letra de la canción son. "La miré desde una distancia cuando ella caminaba hasta el muro en sus manos ella llevaba algunas flores mientras las bombas lacrimógenas comenzaban a caer. Ella sacó lápiz y papel como para trazar sus memorias. Ella miró hacia el cielo y las palabras que dijo fueron estas. Ella dijo, Señor, mi hijo era especial y él significó mucho para mí y me gustaría verlo una vez más ¿Ves? Todo lo que tengo son las memorias y los momentos para recordar, entonces Señor, le podría decir que él es más que un nombre en una pared"

Mi primo Frankie Sánchez fue una baja de la Guerra de Vietnam. Él era un joven extraordinario. Como los otros, él obedecía órdenes y dio su todo antes de que su vida fuera segada antes de tiempo. Yo, junto a familiares asistimos al servicio fúnebre para su madre en Dodge City, Kan., hace casi dos años. Yo recuerdo que mi tía Marcelina era siempre muy agradable y ella siempre nos hacía sentir bienvenidos cuando visitábamos la parte Oeste de Kansas. En mi opinión, la pérdida de su hijo en 1966 la cubrió con una tristeza que nunca la abandonaría.

Siempre era una alegría cuando visitaba Dodge City o mis primos nos visitaban en Kansas City, Kan., en los años cincuenta. Los primos Lena, David y Frankie eran siempre divertidos de visitar. David era de mi edad y le gustaban las aventuras. Aunque Frankie era dos años mayor, a él siempre le gustaba practicar con los muchachos más jóvenes para motivarlos a practicar. Él era como un hermano mayor para mí. Recientemente, después de haberle pedido algunos artículos relacionados con Frankie su hermana Lena, ella me envió varios recortes de periódicos del Dodge City Globe. Una edición fechada el 9 de marzo de 1966, llevaba como titular, "Misa Conducida para la Primera Baja Local en Vietnam". La Misa fue realizada en la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en donde Frankie había servido como monaguillo. Durante el sermón, el Reverendo Leonard Burghart habló sobre responsabilidades. El dijo, "Nuestros niños mueren en vano, cuando nuestros ciudadanos en casa no levantarían la antorcha de la libertad y la justicia - y a los grupos de las minorías se les niegan los mismos derechos que a nuestros niños le han pedido defender en el campo de batalla".

La historia de la familia Sánchez fue una de servicio. El papá de Frankie y tres tíos

habían todos servido en la Segunda Guerra Mundial y su otro tío había sido herido gravemente en la Guerra de Corea. Él fue un buen hermano para su única hermana Lena y su hermano más joven, David.

Él sirvió en la Guardia Nacional de Kansas por un año y luego se cambió al Ejército regular. Él acumuló diez años consecutivos de servicios en el Ejército. Él era un artillero que era parte de la tripulación de un helicóptero - Primera Unidad Aérea Móvil, Compañía A de la Primera División de Caballería. Él estaba supuesto a volar de regreso a los estados, pero perdió su vida el día antes, el 23 de febrero de 1966. Él fue la primera baja de Dodge City en Vietnam.

Su pérdida fue sentida profundamente por todos los que lo conocieron. Según los titulares del periódico aparecido más tarde durante ese mes, su pérdida fue también una llamada de atención para muchos. El título "El Impacto de la Guerra en Dodge City es Revisado" siguió a un artículo con derechos de copia aparecido en el Wall Street Journal el 24 de marzo de 1966. Este artículo revisaba el efecto de la Guerra de Vietnam sobre los 14.000 residentes de Dodge City.

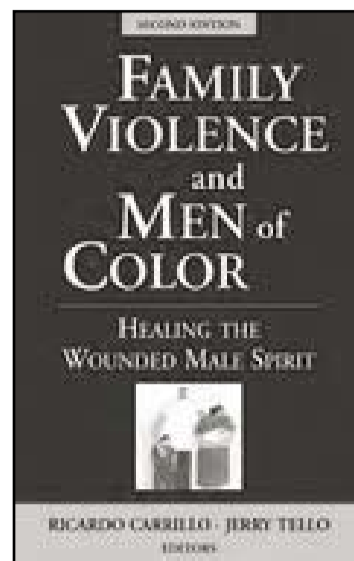
"En entrevistas con muchos residentes, el reportero Everett Groseclose se encontró con la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe repleta para el funeral de Frank Sánchez, una víctima de la guerra. Los estudiantes universitarios que contribuían doblaron la cuota de sangre en el Colegio St. Mary of the Plains, ayudados por el Colegio Junior de Dodge City y jóvenes están trabajando con más ahínco para permanecer en las universidades con la esperanza de evitar el reclutamiento".

El día primero de julio de 1966, la Primera Brigada (Aerotransportada) de la Primera División de Caballería ya no era una unidad de infantería convencional, sino que se había convertido en una división de asalto aéreo. Frankie Sánchez era parte de la Primera División de Caballería. Estoy orgulloso de él. Él siempre estará en los pensamientos de su familia y de la Caballería Aérea en <http://www.allthewaybrigade.com/> - bajen hasta donde dice "Nuestros Camaradas Caídos" - hagan un click en enero - marzo 1966 - bajo el título "USTEDES SON RECORDADOS" - Muerto en acción - Sanchez Frankie SP4 A Co 1st Bn/12th Cav.

Su hermana, Lena lo recuerda como una persona amorosa que salió de Dodge City siendo un hombre muy joven. El Ejército de Los EE.UU. fue una opción para que él obtuviera más tarde una educación universitaria. Para él, allí no habían oportunidades de empleo en su pueblo natal - luego él se pasaría muchos años fuera de su hogar en el oeste de Kansas. Ella recuerda el trauma de la familia al enterarse de su muerte en Vietnam y luego la soledad que se sintió después que él se había ido.

CARRILLO SAYS LATINO WOMEN OFTEN DO NOT SEEK MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

CONT./PAGE 1



"I want to get a dialogue started about domestic violence within the Latino community. That is why we have him coming here so that we can start a dialogue and then we can decide on a course of action to take," said Gedeon.

According to ALIANZA (National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence), one in three adult women experience physical assault by a partner during adulthood. Their studies have found that 5.3 million intimate partner victimizations occur each year among women ages 18 and older. Women, 16 to 24 years old, and women in families with incomes below \$10,000 were more likely than other women to be victims of violence by their partner. This violence results in 2 million injuries and 1300 deaths each year.

Dr. Carrillo works with health care agencies and organi-

zations to implement programs into their curriculum to address the domestic violence issues. He provides training and direction in making resources available to the agencies, programs, and systems that are responsible for the policy, research, training, community building and organizational development of programs committed to eliminating domestic violence in the Latino community.

"I am really excited about coming to Kansas City to speak with members of the community there. I am hoping that we can have some consensus for hope, that we can develop a safe community," stated Dr. Carrillo. "It sounds like it is an opportune time for the community. It is an opportunity for the community to try to deal with the issue of domestic violence among families but they also need to address the problem of gang violence, the issue of absentee parents and lack of parental involvement with the children. The community seems to be ready to move on to the next level, and I am excited to see that happen."

Domestic violence abuse by men directed at women is a behavior that many males have learned at home and in a society that accepts that violence as a way of resolving differences. When children see violence in the home, they learn that is the way to handle conflict. The Latino community is seeing a rising number of violent acts against mothers from their own sons and daughters.

"Violence is a learned behavior and there are a number of issues of why Latinos be-

Carrillo dice que las mujeres latinas comúnmente no buscan servicios para la salud mental.

CONT./PÁGINA 1

El Dr. Carrillo es un renombrado orador y psicólogo con años de experiencia trabajando con hombres latinos que han estado involucrados en violencia doméstica.

"Quiero comenzar por entablar un diálogo sobre la violencia doméstica dentro de la comunidad latina. Es por eso que le hemos traído acá para que pueda comenzar un diálogo y luego podremos decidir qué vía de acción tomar", dijo Gedeon.

Según ALIANZA (Alianza Nacional Latina para la Eliminación de la Violencia Doméstica), una de cada tres mujeres adultas experimentan asaltos físicos de parte de un compañero durante su vida adulta. Sus estudios han encontrado que 5,3 millones de incidentes involucrando a personas que caen víctimas de sus compañeros íntimos, han ocurrido cada año entre mujeres de 18 años y mayores. Las mujeres de 16 a 24 años de edad y las mujeres de familias con ingresos menores

de \$10.000 fueron más propensas que ninguna otra mujer a ser víctimas de la violencia por parte de un compañero. Esta violencia resulta en 2 millones de lesiones y 1.300 muertes cada año.

El Dr. Carrillo trabaja con agencias y organizaciones del cuidado de la salud para implementar programas en sus currículos para tratar los problemas de la violencia doméstica. Él ofrece entrenamiento y dirección al hacer disponibles recursos a las agencias, programas y sistemas que son responsables por las políticas, la investigación, el entrenamiento, edificación comunitaria y desarrollo organizacional de programas comprometidos a eliminar la violencia doméstica en la comunidad latina.

"Estoy verdaderamente entusiasmado por venir a Kansas City a platicar con miembros de la comunidad. Espero que podamos alcanzar algún consenso para la esperanza de que podamos desarrollar una comunidad segura", declaró en Dr. Carrillo. "Suena como que es un momento oportuno para la comunidad. Es una oportunidad que la comunidad tiene para tratar de negociar con el problema de la violencia doméstica entre familias, pero ellos también tienen que tratar el problema de la violencia de las pandillas, el problema de los padres ausentes y la falta de participación de los padres en las vidas de sus hijos. La comunidad pareciera estar lista a avanzar al próximo nivel y estoy entusiasmado de ver que eso suceda".

El abuso de la violencia doméstica por parte de hombres y que es dirigido hacia las mujeres, es un comportamiento que muchos hombres han aprendido en casa y en una sociedad que acepta esa violencia como una manera de resolver las diferencias. Cuando los niños observan la violencia en sus hogares, ellos aprenden que esa es la manera de manejar conflictos. La comunidad latina está viendo un creciente número de actos de violencia en contra de madres perpetrados por sus propios hijos e hijas.

"La violencia es un comportamiento que se aprende y allí

come violent. First and foremost, there are some countries where they have been racked with Civil War, where violence is an approved and accepted way of dealing with conflict," explained Carrillo. "The migration of Latinos into the United States may cause some to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Some immigrants may be dealing with mental health issues when they come into the United States, and their illness is complicated with anxiety as they don't understand the language, they don't know where things are, they don't understand the customs here and the values. This creates a higher rate of alcoholism or substance abuse and women develop higher rates of depression," he said.

Dr. Carrillo told *Hispanic News* that Latino women often will not look for or access mental health services. Many times these women feel that the mental health issues are in their body and they go to a Primary Health Care Clinic for treatment, but many times these clinics are not equipped to deal with the underlying issues of domestic violence and depression.

"When people come into a domestic violence program, we will see people who have a variety of co-occurring disorders, Post Traumatic Stress is one of them. Read the papers, our war veterans are coming back severely disturbed and there is very little help for them. People who come from war torn situations, who migrate across two or three countries, who are involved in or being assaulted or ripped off by gangs are going to come over pretty disturbed. The problem is there are some services trying to help some of these people but they are not equipped to deal with the many issues that they have. That is what I bring to the table, how you deal with domestic violence and co-occurring disorders like Post Traumatic disorder, trauma

situations, substance abuse and other related health issues that stem from the experience of the people who have migrated into this country," added Carrillo.

Gedeon is hoping to have a high number of men attending Carrillo's presentation. "We are hoping to bring the different sectors of the community, in this case, the legal field, the social services agencies, we have the Department of Family Services and protection and advocacy groups," she said.

Gedeon's goal is to get Latino men to seek the help that they need and put a stop to the violence. After listening to a previous program by Dr. Carrillo, she came to realize that people can change and begin to heal. "If we can see that we are all connected, we are all part of a harmonious connector, then you can see that even perpetrators and aggressors are also feeling pain, and we have to be able to engage them in a way without being condensing but with compassion but still hold them responsible knowing that they are in pain too," she said.

Carrillo addresses the means by which individuals and communities can break the cycle of violence and change the cycle of high school dropouts. He talks to parents about ways to break the gang recruitment that is occurring with their children. He encourages communities to work together and decide how they will resolve violence issues that plague their communities.

"All communities take into account racism, discrimination, oppression, colonization and histories in their models when dealing with abuse issues, but sometimes they want to use models that one size fits all and they wonder why they are not retaining men of color in these treatment programs," said Dr. Carrillo.

que yo traigo a la mesa, cómo uno tienen que tratar con la violencia doméstica y con desordenes coexistentes como el Desorden Post Traumático, situaciones de trauma, abuso de drogas y otros problemas relacionados a la salud que emanan de la experiencia de la gente que ha emigrado a este país", agregó Carrillo.

Gedeon espera contar con una alta cifra de hombres asistiendo a la presentación de Carrillo. "Estamos esperando traer a los diferentes sectores de la comunidad, en este caso, al campo legal, a las agencias de servicios sociales, tenemos al Departamento de Servicios Familiares y a grupos de protección y abogacía", dijo ella.

El objetivo de Gedeon es hacer que los hombres latinos busquen la ayuda que necesitan y detener la violencia. Después de haber escuchado un programa previo del Dr. Carrillo, ella se dio cuenta que la gente puede cambiar y comenzar a sanar. "Si podemos darnos cuenta que todos estamos conectados, que todos somos parte de un armonioso conector, entonces uno puede ver que incluso los perpetradores y los agresores también están sintiendo dolor y tenemos que ser capaces de hacerlos participar de una manera que no nos lleve a ser condescendientes, sino que con compasión, pero todavía hacerlos sentirse responsables sabiendo que ellos también están sintiendo dolor", dijo ella.

Carrillo trata las formas por las cuales cada individuo y cada comunidad pueden romper el ciclo de la violencia y cambiar el ciclo de las deserciones escolares. Él platica con los padres sobre maneras de romper el reclutamiento de las pandillas que está ocurriendo con sus hijos. Él exhorta a las comunidades a trabajar juntos y decidir cómo ellos pueden resolver los problemas de la violencia que plagan sus comunidades.

"Todas las comunidades toman en cuenta el racismo, la discriminación, la opresión, la colonización e historias en sus modelos cuando tratan con problemas de abuso, pero algunas veces ellos quieren usar modelos de un sólo tipo apto para todos y se preguntan porqué no están reteniendo a hombres de color en estos programa de tratamientos", dijo el Dr. Carrillo.

FYI

LATINO CIVIL RIGHT SUMMIT MEETING SET FOR MAY

In an effort to foster an open and informative dialogue in the Latino Community regarding Police-Community Relations the Coalition of Hispanic Organizations (COHO) is presenting two important events.

COHO Board President Christina Esteban touts the importance of these events to members of the Latino Community. "This effort to educate the community about their rights is a necessity in light of the current climate in which Latinos and Law Enforcement are perceived to be at odds." Esteban said. "Also, among our leadership there's a need to meet and confer with members of law enforcement in order to create a constructive dialogue."

On May 28, 2009 at 6:00pm
Legal Aid of Western Missouri

will be presenting a report on Community-Police Relations followed by a panel discussion. The panel includes members from the Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas Police Departments. Community activist Alvin Sykes will be in attendance along with Anita Russell, President of the KCMO NAACP, Crystal Crowder, a Legal Aid Criminal Law Attorney and Elena Morales of El Centro, Inc. The meeting will be facilitated by Rita Valenciano of the Department of Justice, Community Relations Services.

As a follow-up, a Community Action forum will be held on May 30, 2009 at 10:00 am - 12 pm at Cristo Rey High School located at 211 Linwood, Kansas City, Missouri. Members of the community attending this

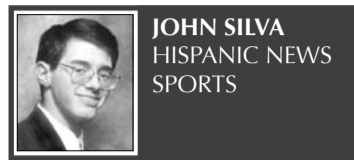
event will have the opportunity to learn about their rights when interacting with Law Enforcement. Additionally, volunteer attorneys will be on hand to answer legal questions.

These events are sponsored by COHO, ACLU of Kansas & Western Missouri, The University of Central Missouri, NAACP, The Urban League, El Centro, Inc., U.S. Department of Justice, Community Relations Service, National Lawyer's Guild Kansas City Chapter, Cristo Rey High School, Legal Aid of Western Missouri and Donnelly College.

For more information contact: Jessica Piedra, Coalition of Hispanic Organizations, Civil Rights Committee Chair at (816)474-6750 or email at luchadoramama@yahoo.com

hn SPORTS ROUND UP!

Big, Bad Wolff blowing nets down for Wizards



JOHN SILVA
HISPANIC NEWS
SPORTS

When Josh Wolff returned to MLS last summer it did not come with the same amount of fanfare as Brian McBride got when he rejoined the league. McBride came back after a successful decade with English Premier League club Fulham. Wolff came back after a couple of years in the German Bundesliga with Munich 1860.

Both men were part of the 2002 World Cup Quarterfinal U.S. Team but Wolff's reputation was that of a man on his last leg when he returned to Kansas City. Five years removed from his best season in MLS when he scored 10 goals for the Wizards the forward is currently

Two more teams to tease KC?

It's been a little while since Kansas City has been used as leverage by an NBA or NHL team to get a franchise a better home in the town they currently play in. It looks like the NHL is going back that well while the NBA may soon come into play.

Hockey's newest franchise to be fed up with their current surroundings is the New York Islanders. Once a crown jewel in the sport the Isles have come into ruin over the last decade. Team Owner Charles Wang has been attempting to upgrade his team's rink since he took over eight years ago.

Wang's attempts to build new arenas in smaller and grander scales have failed to get public funding on Long Island. In an attempt to let his fan base know that his teams don't have to play all of their games in New York the Islanders will be playing an exhibition game at Sprint Center this fall.

Speculation in papers in New York are that the Islanders would be willing to move to Kansas City if the Islanders don't get a new

arena out of an expensive Light-house project expected to go before the voters in New York.

This idea has been floating around for months. Just this week a report came out on ESPN regarding an NBA franchise that could be on the move. The New Jersey Nets once upon a time played in Brooklyn. After playing in the Meadowlands for years developer Bruce Ratner was set to bring the team back to the borough with a redeveloped neighborhood on a scale larger in scope than the Power and Light district.

Snags occurred and the current economic climate in New York has all but killed Ratner's dream. The Nets were a team of cache just a couple of years ago potentially able to lure LeBron James because of his relationship with part owner Jay Z. Now they are a team with an owner unwilling to move to Newark and unable to get into NYC.

The report that ran on ESPN's crawl stated the team is in a position to sell and mentioned two possible destinations. The

first was Seattle, which is looking for a new basketball franchise after Oklahoma City took everything but the name Sonics from the Emerald City. The second? You guessed it. Kansas City and its sparkling Sprint Center were mentioned.

Would either club really leave the biggest market in the country for a market that lost their last NBA franchise in the 1980's and NHL franchise in the 1970's? The common sense answer is no, but as long as teams are looking for leverage, Kansas City will continue to emerge as an attractive alternative.

Sometime a franchise may truly want to make the Sprint Center its home. If that were to happen a pertinent question will need to be addressed. Will it be a good deal for Kansas City to take on the club? It's a good question worth asking and one that will be revisited by *KC Hispanic News* should the Islanders situation remain in play as the exhibition game draws near.

The increasing number of personal watercraft and inexperienced operators are also becoming a concern for waterborne law enforcement. More than 1.5 million personal watercraft are estimated to be in operation in the United States, and about 23 percent of all boating accidents involve personal watercraft.

STAYING SAFE DURING MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers urges recreation seekers to follow safety tips while enjoying water-based activities during the Memorial Day weekend and the summer to lower the risk of accidents.

Drowning is the second-leading cause of accidental death in the United States even though it is possible to reduce drowning deaths by wearing a life-jacket. About 700 recreational boaters die each year because of boating mishaps.

"More than 618, 000 boaters are expected to flock to lakes in the Kansas City District this

Memorial Day weekend, and we want to ensure everyone's visit is enjoyable and safe," said Gary Foster, the Corps' natural resources management specialist for the Kansas City District. "The best way for everyone to enjoy this holiday season is to not drink and boat and to remember to wear life jackets while out on the water."

Statistics show that 96 percent of those who drown at Corps lakes could have survived if they had been wearing a life jacket. Nationally, alcohol use is the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents.

KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE NEAR WATER

It's a warm summer day and you're at the beach with your children. Your cell phone rings and you answer it, shifting your focus from your kids to the conversation. Good idea? Not at all, according to Safe Kids Kansas, the distraction could be deadly. Children can get into trouble in a matter of seconds when around water, so Safe Kids Kansas recommends that parents actively supervise — with their eyes on their kids at all times — when they are in or near the water.

Drowning is the second highest cause of unintentional death for children between ages from 1 to 4 and 10 to 14. Approximately 3 out of 4 pool submersion deaths and 3 out of 5 pool submersion injuries occur at a home pool. Overall, about 830 children ages 14 and under die each year of unintentional drownings, and on average, there are an estimated 3,600

injuries to children after near-drowning incidents each year.

"Kids drown quickly and quietly," said Jan Stegelman, state director of Safe Kids Kansas. "A drowning child cannot cry or shout for help. The most important precaution for parents is active supervision. Simply being near your child is not necessarily supervising," Stegelman said.

Even a near-drowning incident can have lifelong consequences. Kids who survive a near-drowning may have brain damage. After four to six minutes under water, the damage is

usually irreversible. Although 90 percent of parents say they supervise their children while swimming, many acknowledge they engage in other distracting activities at the same time — talking, eating, reading or taking care of another child.

"A supervised child is in sight at all times with your undivided attention focused on the child," said Stegelman. When there are children in or near the water, adults should take turns serving as the designated "Water Watcher," paying undivided attention. Visit www.usa.safekids.org/water to download a free Water Watcher badge.



CELEBRANDO NUESTRO QUINTO ANIVERSARIO
iGracias Kansas City

"YOU HUMBLE ME"

CONT./PAGE 1



"You don't know how creative you really are," says former baseball umpire Steve Palermo to 'my heroes' at García Elementary.

"En verdad que ustedes no saben lo creativo que son", le dijo el ex árbitro de béisbol Steve Palermo a "mis héroes" en la Elemental García.

their role model all year, older students tutoring younger in reading and helping with literacy, creating

a song and DVD, all had finally culminated with this event.

Again, the baseball hero who had set records and given it all up to rescue a waitress whose life was endangered in an alley robbery reiterated, "You humble me, and you can be sure I need to stay in touch with you. I'm always the winner when I visit."

He isn't the school's first hero. Primitivo Garcia, the namesake of the Kansas City, Missouri School District (KCMSD) school, was the first.

In 1968, he, too, had rescued a woman a gang and gunshots. She was his teacher, and expecting a child. Their second was activist Cesar Chavez. Then came African-American baseball player John "Buck" O'Neil, and a local librarian Irene Ruiz, who worked to build up the much-needed Hispanic library collections and Spanish language programs. Each year, a class is chosen to participate in the school-wide, interdisciplinary program in an effort to strengthen community ties.

Not all Garcia heroes were

famous, not all were available at all times. However, the students of Garcia were touched by something extraordinary in these people's lives, and more importantly, were able to share it. These people had almost a touch of "accidental glory" about them that inspired students to produce story vignettes anyone would enjoy watching on broadcast television. Primitivo made a snap decision and died. Palermo thought he would die; he still lives in pain.

Irene Ruiz? Irene is just an ordinary person embodying the very truths most students in the District, when asked, would like adults to learn. To listen and hear what they're saying, to be there when they need them, to "not be the hero" but to teach them what they need to learn, when they need to learn it. So, again, why do kids need heroes? Come on, who was really greater? Homer, who was real, or Ajax the warrior, who was a myth? Very few can be Hercules, not many can make a decision like Primitivo's. But we can all aspire to be an Irene Ruiz.

"Ustedes me hacen sentir humildad"

CONT./PÁGINA 1

El sexto y segundo grado habían estudiado a su modelo de ejemplar todo el año, los estudiantes de mayor edad ayudando a los más pequeños a leer y ayudándolos con su alfabetización, creando una canción y un DVD, todo ello culminó finalmente con este evento.

Una vez más, el héroe del béisbol que rompió todos los récords y lo dio todo para rescatar a una mesera cuya vida fue puesta en peligro en un robo en un callejón reiteró, "Ustedes me hacen sentir humildad y ustedes pueden estar seguros que yo necesito estar en contacto con ustedes. Yo soy siempre el ganador cuando hago visitas".

Él no es el primer héroe de la escuela. Primitivo García, el nombre que lleva la escuela del Distrito Escolar de Kansas City, Missouri (KCMSD), fue el primero.

En 1968, él, también, rescató a una mujer una pandilla y disparos. Ella era su maestra y esperaba un bebé. El segundo fue el activista César Chávez. Luego vino el beisbolista afroestadounidense John "Buck" O'Neil y una bibliotecaria local, Irene Ruiz, quien trabajó para construir las muy necesitadas colecciones de la biblioteca hispana y programas en el idioma español. Cada año, una clase es elegida para participar en el programa interdisciplinario de todas las escuelas en un esfuerzo por fortalecer lazos comunitarios.

No todos los héroes de García fueron famosos, no todos se encontraban disponibles todo el tiempo. Sin embargo, los estudiantes de García sintieron emoción por algo extraordinario en las vidas de esas personas y en forma más importante, pudieron compartirlo. Estas personas tuvieron casi un toque de "gloria accidental" respecto a ellos que fue lo que inspiró a los estudiantes a producir viñetas de historias que cualquiera pudiera disfrutar al verlas transmitidas por la televisión. Primitivo tomó una decisión súbita y murió. Palermo pensó que iba a morir; él aún vive sintiendo dolor.

¿Irene Ruiz? Irene es simplemente una persona corriente que personifica las mismísimas verdades que a la mayoría de los estudiantes en el distrito, cuando se les pregunta, les gustaría que los adultos aprendieran. A escuchar y a oír lo que ellos están diciendo, que estén allí cuando se les necesite, que "no sean el héroe", sino que enseñarles lo que necesitan aprender, cuando necesitan aprenderlo. Entonces, nuevamente ¿Porqué los niños necesitan héroes? ¡Vamos! ¿Quién fue verdaderamente el más grande? ¿Homero, quien fue real, o Ajax el guerrero, quien fue un mito? Muy pocos pueden ser Hércules, no muchos pueden tomar una decisión como la de Primitivo. Pero todos podemos aspirar a ser una Irene Ruiz.

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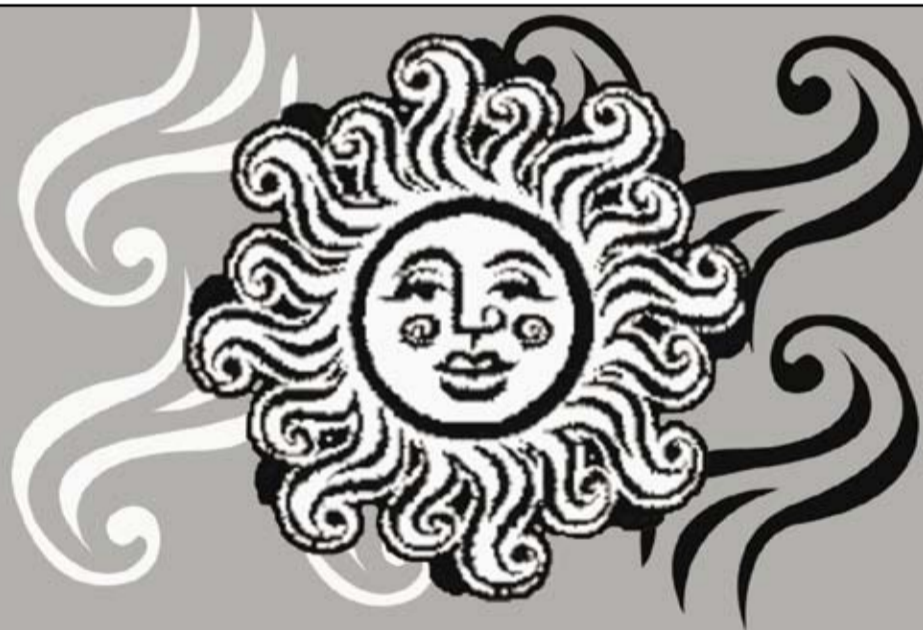
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TONY BECERRA SHARES HIS MESSAGE WITH STUDENTS

CONT./PAGE 1



Marlee Stempleman's ninth grade English classes listen quietly to Tony Becerra, one of the original Freedom Writers, talk about how he and his classmates with the help of their teacher, Erin Gruwell, wrote the Freedom Writers Diary.

La clase de Inglés del noveno grado de Marlee Stempleman escucha atentamente a Tony Becerra, uno de los primeros Escritores de la Libertad, para hablar sobre cómo él y sus compañeros de clase con la ayuda de la profesora, Erin Gruwell, escribieron el diario de los Escritores de la Libertad.

were smart, but she could not tap their interest in English.

"As an educator, I was frustrated with many of my students, their seemingly lack of interest in regards to reading and writing, their low grades, and their lack of homework being completed," Stempleman said.

She needed a plan to draw her students into wanting to learn. Inspired by the work of Erin Gruwell, a ninth-grade English teacher, Stempleman decided to show her students the movie, "The Freedom Writers," which is based on Gruwell and her students in an inner-city California school.

"It seems as though this movie inspired many of my students. Many of my students were able to relate with the backgrounds of the Freedom Writers. Some of my students are growing up with abuse, poverty, or seeing gang violence or they have lost a friend or family member through violence. I think for the first time they were able to see that despite all of these adversities, success can happen," she said.

Tony Becerra comparte su mensaje con los estudiantes

CONT./PÁGINA 1

Stempleman, una maestra de Inglés de noveno grado en la Secundaria Turner, sabía que sus estudiantes eran inteligentes, pero ella no podía extraer su interés en el Inglés.

"Como maestra, me sentía frustrada con muchos de mis estudiantes, su aparente falta de interés en lo relacionado a la lectura o la escritura, sus bajas calificaciones y su inhabilidad para completar tareas", dijo Stempleman.

Ella necesitaba contar con un plan para atraer a sus estudiantes hacia el deseo por aprender. Inspirada en la obra de Erin Gruwell, maestra de Inglés, Stempleman decidió mostrarle a su estudiante la película "The Freedom Writers" (Los Escritores de la Libertad"), la cual se basa en Gruwell y sus estudiantes en una escuela urbana de California.

"Pareció como que la película inspiró a muchos de mis estudiantes. Muchos de mis estudiantes pudieron relacionarse con las procedencias de los Escritores de la Libertad. Algunos de mis estudiantes están creciendo en medio del abuso, la pobreza o mirando la violencia de las pandillas o han perdido a un amigo o familiar a causa de la violencia. Creo que por primera vez ellos fueron capaces de ver que a pesar de todas esas adversidades, el suceso puede ocurrir", dijo ella.

La película se basa en la maestra de Inglés Erin Gruwell y su exitoso intento por interesar a estudiantes de secundarias procedentes de vecindarios de bajos ingresos a expresarse mediante la escritura. Sus escrituras fueron compiladas en un libro que se convirtió en un éxito de ventas en la nación y que lleva como título, "The Freedom Writers Diary" ("El Diario de los Escritores de la Libertad").

El salón de clases de Gruwell estaba dividido por razas. A sus estudiantes parecía no importarles nada relacionado con la escuela o con graduarse. Su determinación y duro trabajo le demostró a los estudiantes que aunque ellos venían

all the struggles are the same for the kids," said Antonio (Tony) Becerra, one of the original Freedom Writers. "We had the same struggles 14, 15 years ago — it is the same thing, it is the exact same thing. I think that is why they can relate so well to the book, to the story and to the message because it is the exact same thing they are going through. They feel the same way we feel, we feel alone, we felt we were the only ones in the world who was going through these things."

Becerra visited Turner High School to speak to Stempleman's ninth-grade English classes about his life before and after he met Gruwell and how writing has changed his life.

"When I first started writing poetry, I was amazed that I wrote a poem. I structured it and I read it in front of the class. I was amazed at how that made me feel. It felt like someone had reached into my chest and took out a handful of tar that was sitting there making me feel bad, it was so uplifting. Before that I didn't know anything could do that," he said.

Becerra continues to write poetry and has been working on a children's book.

He had a rough childhood with an alcoholic father, a mother who worked all the time and who had no interest in him. After his older sister moved away at age 18, he had to get himself up for school, fix his own breakfast and dinner, he had to do his own laundry, and he lived in fear of gangs that roamed the neighborhood.

"The gangs didn't want me as a member. I was a nerdy, scrawny little kid. But they definitely had a major affect on me. They were always in our neighborhood. The gangs would harass you and pick on you sometimes. It was the wanna-be gang members and sometimes they did it for money or just to pick on you," he said.

As he stood before the ninth-graders, he listened as Stempleman read the words of her

students. She read each journal entry slowly, letting the words sink in. Their words echoed the pain they have experienced in their young lives. Some journal entries painted haunting images of death and bloodshed, of young bodies lying on the ground dying, of family trusts being broken and lives shattered. The words echoed in the auditorium as she read, "I learn a hard lesson when I held my homie in my arms as he laid dying," or "it is tough living in the ghetto," or "as a child I went through my dad being a drug addict and an alcoholic," or "the sharp pain shooting through my body," or "I am just a girl in the shadow," and "I remember my daddy's eyes as he beat us."

Becerra, who works for The Freedom Writers Foundation, is hoping to encourage and inspire students to pick up pens and put down guns. The Foundation works to decrease the number of high school dropouts and gives students opportunities to reach their academic potential and aspire to pursue a higher education.

The students at the Long Beach school, where Gruwell first began teaching, all thought they had been written off by the education system. They were labeled as unteachable and below average. Gruwell didn't listen.

"I was one of those kids who liked the teachers who said, 'If you don't want to be here, then just sit there and be quiet so the ones who want to be here can learn,'" Becerra said. "I was like, 'Cool, I don't care about this class,' so I would just sleep in class. But Erin never let you do that. You didn't sleep in her class or talk or act out in her class because she wouldn't send you to the office, instead she would constantly call on you."

When Gruwell began to teach her class about poetry, Becerra was the type of student who questioned everything because he didn't want to write poetry. "I didn't want anything to do with it," he said, "I come from a family that everyone works with their hands, they didn't write. I questioned why do we need to know this stuff, why do we need to know the rules and she said you have to know the rules if you are going to break them. She said all the great writers in the world break all the writing rules."

académicos y aspirar a obtener una educación superior.

Todos los estudiantes en la escuela de Long Beach, en donde Gruwell comenzó enseñando, pensaban que habían sido abandonados por el sistema educacional. Ellos eran tildados como estudiantes a quienes no se les podía enseñar y estaban bajo el promedio. Gruwell no escuchó.

"Yo era uno de esos muchachos a quien le gustaban los maestros que decían, 'Si tú no quieres estar aquí, entonces simplemente siéntate allí y permanece tranquilo para que los otros que quieren estar aquí puedan aprender,'" dijo Becerra. "Yo actuaba como, 'Que bueno, no me importa esta clase', entonces simplemente dormía en la clase. Pero Erin nunca te dejaba hacer eso. Tú no dormías o hablabas o actuabas mal en su clase porque ella no te enviaba a la oficina, en vez de ello, ella constantemente te llamaba."

Cuando Gruwell comenzó a enseñar su clase relacionada a la poesía, Becerra era el tipo de estudiante que lo cuestionaba todo porque él no quería escribir poesía. "No quería tener nada que hacer con eso" dice él, "Yo venía de una familia en la que todos trabajaban con sus manos, ellos no escribían. Yo cuestionaba el porqué tenían que saber sobre esta cosa, porqué tenían que conocer las reglas y ella decía que uno tenía que conocer las reglas si es que las iba a romper. Ella decía que todos los grandes escritores del mundo rompían con todas las reglas de la escritura".

Ello capturó su interés y comenzó a escribir poesía. Uno de sus primeros poemas se trató de un primo que había sido asesinado en una confrontación de pandillas. Gruwell comenzó a significar una diferencia en su vida. Antes de que él viniera a su clase, a él no le importaba si es que iba a la escuela o si incluso se graduaría. Él tenía 25 ó 26 ausencias en cada clase. Pero era su interés y su motivación lo que lo mantenía regresando al salón de clases. Como él le dijo a los estudiantes de la Secundaria Turner, no importaba si su escritura no era buena, Gruwell siempre solía decirles cuan buen trabajo habían ellos hecho y cómo a ella le gustaban sus historias.

It captured his interest and he began to write poetry. One of his first poems was about a cousin who had been killed in a gang confrontation. Gruwell began to make a difference in his life. Before he came into her classroom, he didn't care whether he went to school or even graduated. He had 25 or 26 absences in every class. But it was her interest and her encouragement that kept him coming back to the classroom. As he told the students at Turner High School, it didn't matter if their writing was bad, Gruwell would always tell them what a great job they had done and how she liked their story.

His luck changed when he was put into that classroom. Even though the students were disrespectful and didn't care what Gruwell had to say or teach, she never gave up trying to reach her students. Once the students learned she was not going to give up on them, they began to listen and learn.

"Fortunately I got into that class where someone cared and that made a difference because I would have been one who dropped out in the ninth grade, if I didn't have her. She was an important part of that, but it was also what she did, not only did she empower us, she empowered us to each other. In the movie and the book, we talk about how it became our home — it really was because most of us did not want to go home. We didn't have anything to go home to, I would always prefer to stay at school than to go home because home was always worse," he said.

Becerra graduated from high school and he went to college and eventually earned a degree, but it was not an easy path. His life took many turns. He received a liberal arts degree from California State in Long Beach and is considering returning to get his teaching credentials. "I am bilingual and I am leaning toward teaching Spanish or English," he said.

He was the first one in his family to attend college. "I am always honest when I talk to students and I tell them that I dropped out of college several times, but I went back and I finished school. I tell them it is hard and everybody struggles. Everything I have done in my life has come at a great

price and at a great struggle. I think it is really important for students to know that anything worth something is going to be very, very difficult to do," said Becerra.

As project coordinator for the Freedom Writers Outreach program, he hopes students will learn that they have options. They don't have to choose a life of gangs, drugs and violence they can go on to school and graduate.

The Freedom Writers Foundation is involved in other cities in helping schools to create after-school programs. The hours of 3 to 6 p.m. has proven to be the most dangerous times for children to be alone.

Sometimes children are looking for a place to belong, a place that offers acceptance and he knows how that feels first hand. Growing up, Becerra's parents never showed an interest in what he was doing at school. His parents have not changed. They still don't have an interest in what he does for a living or in his writing, but he has learned to accept it. He has learned to be responsible for his own life, set goals for himself and to be happy about who he is and what he has accomplished.

"Whenever young people have a hole in their soul that isn't filled with parents and love, they lash out in different ways. I think that is important to remember because sometimes people think kids are just bad, but it is not true. They always need something. Anytime you dig deep into a so-called bad kid, you are always going to find the root of the problem, you are going to find abusive parents, or absent parents. There is always going to be a reason why they are lashing out," he said.

"I want these students to know that there is something better out there. A lot of times kids don't see any other options than drugs and gangs, and sometimes I didn't see any other options. My options were to finish school and I thought graduating was going to be the biggest accomplishment in my life and work with my hands somewhere. I didn't know that there was so much more out there to be done," he said.

For more information log on www.freedomwritersfoundation.org

Su suerte cambió cuando él fue puesto en ese salón de clases. Aunque los estudiantes eran irrespetuosos y no les importaba lo que Gruwell tuviera que decir o enseñar, ella nunca se rindió por tratar de llegarle a sus estudiantes. Una vez que los estudiantes se dieron cuenta de que ella no los iba a abandonar, ellos comenzaron a escucharla y a aprender.

"Afortunadamente llegué a ese salón de clases en donde alguien se preocupaba y eso significó una diferencia puesto que yo hubiera sido uno de los que abandonan la escuela en el noveno grado, si es que no la hubiera tenido. Ella fue una importante parte de ello, pero fue también lo que ella hizo, no solamente ellas nos potenció, ella nos potenció hacia nosotros mismos. En la película y en el libro, platicamos respecto a cómo se convirtió en nuestro hogar — verdaderamente que así ocurrió porque la mayoría de nosotros no queríamos irnos a casa. No teníamos nada que nos hiciera ir a casa, siempre prefería quedarme en la escuela en vez de ir a casa porque la casa era siempre peor", dijo él.

Becerra se graduó de la secundaria y fue a la universidad y eventualmente obtuvo un título, pero no fue un camino fácil. Su vida tomó varios rumbos. Él recibió un título en artes liberales de parte de la Universidad Estatal de California en Long Beach y está considerando regresar para obtener sus credenciales como maestro. "Soy bilingüe y estoy pensando en enseñar español o Inglés", dijo él.

Él fue el primero de su familia en asistir a la universidad. "Yo soy siempre honesto cuando platico con los estudiantes y les cuento que abandoné la universidad varias veces, pero regresé y finalicé con la escuela. Les digo que es difícil y que todos luchan. Todo lo que he hecho en mi vida me ha llegado con un gran precio y con una gran lucha. Creo que es verdaderamente importante para los estudiantes darse cuenta de que cualquier cosa que tiene un valor será muy, muy difícil de hacer", dice Becerra.

Como coordinador de proyecto para el programa de Alcance de Escritores de la Libertad, él espera que los estudiantes aprenderán que tienen opciones. Ellos no tienen

que escoger una vida de pandillas, drogas y violencia, ellos pueden ir a la escuela y graduarse.

La Fundación de Escritores de la Libertad está involucrada en otras ciudades ayudando a las escuelas a crear programas para después de la jornada escolar. El horario de las 3 a las 6 p.m. ha probado ser el espacio de tiempo más peligroso para que los niños estén solos.

Algunas veces los niños buscan un lugar al cual pertenecer, un lugar que les ofrezca aceptación y él sabe por experiencia propia cómo eso hace sentir. Cuando él crecía, sus padres nunca mostraron interés alguno en lo que él estaba haciendo en la escuela. Sus padres no han cambiado. Ellos todavía no muestran interés alguno en lo que él hace para ganarse su vida o lo que hace con su escritura, pero él ha aprendido a aceptarlo. Él ha aprendido a ser responsable por su propia vida, imponerse objetivos para sí mismo y sentirse feliz respecto a quién es él y qué es lo que ha logrado.

"Cuando quiera que sea que los jóvenes tengan un agujero en sus almas el cual no esté siendo llenado con sus padres y con amor, ellos la arremeten de diferentes maneras. Creo que eso es importante de recordar porque algunas veces la gente cree que los muchachos son simplemente malos, pero eso no es verdad. Ellos siempre necesitan de algo. Cada vez que uno escarba profundamente en un mentado muchacho malo, uno siempre va a encontrar la raíz del problema, uno va a encontrar padres abusivos o padres ausentes. Allí siempre va a haber una razón porqué ellos la están arremetiendo", dijo él.

"Quiero que estos estudiantes sepan que allí hay algo mejor. Muchas veces los muchachos no ven ninguna otra opción más que las drogas y las pandillas y algunas veces yo no veo otras opciones. Mis opciones fueron el finalizar la escuela y pensé que el graduarme iba a ser el logro más grande en mi vida y trabajar con mis manos en algún sitio. No sabía que habían tantas cosas que hacer allí", dijo él.

Para mayor información ingresa a www.freedomwritersfoundation.org

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