



Spring 2006

El Centro de la Raza

2524 16th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98144
www.elcentrodelaraza.org 206.957.4605

Thousands Rally & March for Immigration Rights

By Ashley Haugen, Development Assistant

A National Day of Action commenced on April 10, 2006 in Seattle and El Centro de la Raza joined reports of 25,000 people to rally and march for immigration rights. "We are marching for justice," said six-year old Vanessa, who incited many 'si se puede' chants throughout the march using the El Centro megaphone.

The efforts behind seeking fair immigration reform have filled more than just a day of action, however. People all across the

country have devoted astronomical amounts of time and energy, some for their entire lives, to fight for just and human immigration reform.



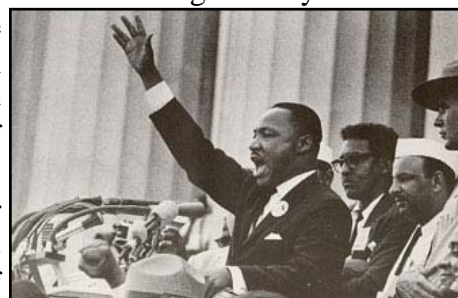
After School Program students Carmen, 9 and Vanessa, 6 starting a crowd chant.

While the march was politically and socially charged, words cannot express the powerful feelings of solidarity and passion that permeated the crowd. Roberto Maestas, Executive Director and Founder of El Centro de la Raza said, "For me, it's like the late 60's. I didn't think I'd see it again in my lifetime, how lucky can I get?" ¡Si se puede!

Overlooked Symbol Ushers in New Era of Hope

By Enrique Gonzalez, Youth Case Manager

On February 27, 2006 an historic event took place. The Martin Luther King County Council voted to change the imperial crown logo of the county to that of the image of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. While this story is of significant importance to many communities here



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
(Photo: www.americanrhetoric.com)

in the Pacific Northwest for its symbolic as well as practical implications, the majority of news coverage was scarce at best. Keeping this in mind, it would be good for all of us to consider why this is so significant.

In 1852 King County was named after William Rufus Devane King who was the Vice Presi-

dent of the United States during the Franklin Pierce presidency and died two months after the election. The then territorial Governor Stevens, in order to gain favor with the White House named our adjoining counties Pierce and King. Considering that Vice President King owned 170 slaves it is hard to think of such a person being representative of what our county stands for.

With the council's victory to change the logo to the image of Dr. King, it ushers in a new era of social consciousness and a symbolic acceptance of the principles for which Dr. King stood for and died for. But what makes the logo change so very significant is

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After attending the MLK logo hearing, an After School Program student was asked, "What did we just do today?" His response:

"We made history."
-Jaime, age 12

WANTED: A Program to End Family Homelessness

By Jessica Harris, Seattle University Work-study

El Centro de la Raza's Life Skills Wage Progression program helps homeless families find and secure employment, increase wages, and improve life skills to maximize employment opportunities. The program offers referrals, a regularly maintained employment board, classes, and personal counseling. Classes are only offered to participants in the Homeless Assistance program and assist people like Jaime.



Jaime with his wife, Maria and their daughter Anna.

Jaime came to Seattle from Honduras at age nine. By age 19 he had met a young woman and planned to be married. He came to El Centro in search of help to support his new family. He and his pregnant wife-to-be were staying with family and friends, and struggled with homelessness and low wages. The Homeless Assistance program enabled Jaime to obtain and maintain permanent housing, and aided with move-in costs. Working part-time in a restaurant, Jaime struggled with low wages and needed

additional income. Encouraged by his case manager, Jaime completed his GED and a nurses' assistant program, but decided he really wanted to pursue a career utilizing his bilingual ability.

Jaime then enrolled in the Life Skills Wage Progression program and after completing 20 hours of classes and job counseling on résumé building and writing, identifying skills for job/career placement, workers' rights, problem solving, practicing mock interviews in English, and finding employment, Jaime did just that: he secured an additional part time position at a staffing company as a bilingual recruiter. He started at \$10 an hour and within two weeks was given a raise of \$12 an hour. Jaime also showed interest in becoming a translator and is in the process of realizing that goal.

Jaime's dedication to success through the Life Skills Wage Progression program illustrates the power of education and the importance of the workshops offered. Daniel, currently coordinating the program, says, "We are trying to help end the cycle of homelessness. This multi-layered program provides employment assistance relevant to homeless, low-income families so that they increase their wages, maintain quality employment and know their rights."

Child Curriculum Promotes Student & Parent Activism

By Ashley Haugen, AmeriCorps Assistant

If you walk into the José Martí Child Development Center, you will see an array of brightly colored artwork, poems in Spanish and English, children laughing and teachers dancing. What is not directly visible is the activist role our young heroes, and their parents, play. José Martí students attend many community and civil rights events as part of awareness building in a supportive environment that is embedded in the curriculum. The students have attended local peace rallies, press conferences, community events and council meetings. Most recently, El Centro's after school program attended the historic Martin Luther King County logo change council meeting and immigrant rights council meeting.

supported by their teachers, community and the El Centro de la Raza family. This unique exposure to civil rights, human rights and social justice activism helps the children build confidence, awareness and communication skills. It also allows them to be a part of making history in their community and many parents are involved in the action as well.



Parent Graciella Ayala (far left) and Family Support Coordinator Diana Elenes (2nd from left) with Christine Gregoire and other advocates for ECEAP Advocate Day in Olympia.

Principle 1 of El Centro de la Raza:

To struggle for a dignified human existence for all people in our society, which includes access to quality healthcare and housing, equal employment and education opportunities, a voice in democratic processes regarding political and social affairs, a responsible economic system which eliminates the vast differences in income; all of which are causes of poverty and deprivation in our society.

(Continued from page 1) Overlooked Symbol Ushers in New Era of Hope that it is a move from rhetoric to action. We can only hope that this is a trend that will continue and that we will begin to see more things happen in a similar fashion.

We must not fall into the rhetorical trap of lofty quotes and sayings that leave us with nothing more than clichés. Rather we need to put the words of Dr. King and other social justice leader’s into perspective and more importantly into action. Now that the MLK County Council has adopted this new image and with it a profound legacy of social justice, it’s time for it leaders to live by the principles that he set forth and join us in our struggle to build the “Beloved Community” that Dr. King so eloquently described.

Dr. King once said, “There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society, who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society, protect that society, but when they don’t have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it.”

On February 27, we as a community witnessed a conscious stake in our society. We saw people coming together not for political agendas or budget arguments. We saw people coming together in the name of love, peace and justice.

Sadly these days are rare, but it is our hope as a community that with every crown that is replaced by Dr. King that each and every citizen in this county be reminded that they are each a part of “the beloved community.”

We aren’t talking about pie-in-the-sky or

happy-go-lucky feelings here. These principles and feelings of hope are real and practical. Much like the days of the civil rights movement when the US was engulfed in war with Vietnam and people of color were enduring the bombs of poverty dropped by the administrations of the time; today we face similar circumstances. A troubling reality is that history seems to be heading down the same path of repetition. With a war in Iraq against other poor people that doesn’t seem to have an end in sight, and attacks of terrorism being waged by politicians against poor people of color right here in “the good old US of A,” it is difficult to believe that times have really changed and that people have matured past the days of blatant racism and bigotry.

In the spirit of social activism, political consciousness, and hope for a better tomorrow, it is our intention to begin to uncover some of the growing dangers of our community and to address these issues candidly and openly.

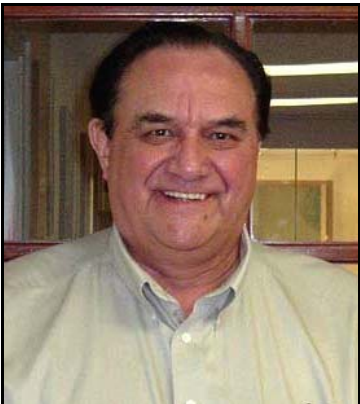
We at El Centro de la Raza seek to change social conditions and wish to work with anyone willing to give of themselves to serve the larger community and the world around them.

Let this logo change be more than symbolic for you and everyone else. Let it be more than just a dream a young minister spoke of in Washington D.C. so many years ago. Let it be the reality that our children, our elders, and everyone in between deserve and so desperately seek.

Join us at El Centro de la Raza or at other organizations to collectively learn how together we can build the “beloved community.”

Enrique is writing a monthly column for the opinion and editorials section of *Beacon Hill News & South District Journal* regarding El Centro de la Raza’s work and connection to Latino social activism throughout the country.

Welcome New Board Member
Leo La Clair



Leo is a member of and the Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist for the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and a new El Centro Board Member beginning in March.

New Board President
David Gasca



Recently elected board president David Gasca is Vice President of Frontier Bank and an expert in economic development.

Donate your car!

We are currently asking for donations of vehicles 1988 and newer. The proceeds from your donation will benefit homeless and low-income children, youth, families and elders. Please call **206.957.4611** to donate your vehicle.

This tax season El Centro has been present at the White Center New Start Youth Program Earned Income Tax Credit outreach site to offer free credit report vouchers to those seeking tax preparation assistance. With the voucher, participants who sign up for a class at El Centro receive a free credit report to check for errors, identity theft and other issues affecting their credit. This outreach has brought new attendees into El Centro’s Financial Literacy and Homeownership Classes. These classes address issues of economic development, empowerment, asset building, budgeting and more. To find out how you can receive a free credit report, make a financial counseling appointment or register for classes please call 206.957.4616.

Hip-Hop for Hope

By Thomas Martinell, Seattle University Work-study

In addition to the current history and poetry classes, Hope for Youth has introduced a Hip-Hop program that teaches youth about this important cultural movement that is often misrepresented in American pop culture and mainstream media.

Leading the program is local Hip-Hop artist and community leader Daniel “Khazm” Kogita, who feels that Hip-Hop culture gives youth a positive outlet to express themselves. Khazm is involved with *Mad Krew*, a production company, and *Universal Zulu Nation*, a community service program, and hosts a radio show on KBCS 91.3 FM on Saturday nights (12-2AM) and a variety show called Hip-Hop 101 TV on cable channel 29/77 that broadcasts in Seattle every Friday night.

The current classes that Khazm teaches, along with local artists El Guanaco and Kwame Stephens-Morrow, are geared toward poetry, music, putting thoughts onto paper, presentation and public speaking. Danny hopes to give his students an opportunity to write and possibly record their own music towards the end of class.

“The thing I like about the program is that we talk about the responsibilities of a practitioner of Hip-Hop, it almost goes against the way the industry is set up,” says Khazm who believes that there is a lot of negativity in the music currently played in the mainstream media.

Khazm hopes that the classes will help students empower themselves. “I’m trying to open their minds about the reality of what this culture is like and let them make their own decisions.” He encourages dialogue and loves it when students engage in discussion. For Khazm, the greatest highlight is when they come to a realization of an important point. “I like to see that light go off above their head,” he says smiling.

El Centro de la Raza is proud of this new program and feels that it will provide the youth of our community with a greater understanding of the history of artistic expression and tools to form their own works of self-expression.



Hip-hop coordinators El Guanaco, Khazm and some of the Hope for Youth students.

Born 1992

13 years experience living in Seattle
Knowing it and watching the gang fights
People dying by the minute
Suffering and watching other familias suffer
For their chicos
Me da fuego in my heart
To watch gang people and friends
Fighting each other
Just because there in different sides
Which doesn’t seem fair to me
Because when one ends up dead
Who suffers? Who?
Their familia...
But it is noticed at the end
It is not fun or cool to be in a gang
I know because I see my own brother
In those kinds of problems
But my brother never wants to hear it
That he’s hurting himself
But most of all his familia
Because te queremos mucho!

-Paula Ramirez, age 13
Denny Middle School, Proyecto Saber

International Women’s Day

\$10,000 Wells Fargo Grant



El Centro celebrated International Women’s Day on March 8, with Nelson Castillo, President of the Hispanic National Bar Association and Brenda Williams, President of the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington.



May Wan of Wells Fargo presents the \$10,000 check to Roberto Maestas, Executive Director & Founder of El Centro de la Raza for our Homeownership Program.

La Cocina Popular

By Ashley Haugen, AmeriCorps Assistant

The Popular Kitchen at El Centro certainly fits this name as it serves children, students, youth, homeless individuals, and community elders every week. The children in the José Martí Child Development Center have their daily meals prepared by La Cocina Popular, as do the seniors in the Senior Nutrition and Wellness program. A free daily lunch is served from the kitchen to homeless and low-income individuals, families and students. La Cocina Popular welcomed a new head chef just one month ago, who has also become quite popular.

“I love the kitchen,” says new head chef Gary. Gary came to El Centro de la Raza because he’s always wanted to find a way to give back to the society he lives in. “I was blown away when I read the description for the head chef position on the internet,” states Gary, “It’s exactly what I was looking for!” Gary was born and raised in Los Angeles and spent 17 years working in his uncles’ gourmet restaurant called Dal Ray. He left to seek adventure in Northern California where he attended culinary academy in Sonoma County. It was here that he met a chef that introduced him to the Bohemian Club, a private men’s club, where Gary rubbed forks with the likes of Bush and Kissinger.

Gary came to Seattle looking for adventure in

1992 and currently lives on Beacon Hill. He spent three years teaching vegetarian-cooking classes at Puget Consumer Co-op, cooked at various restaurants and is most experienced in the catering business, experience that he gained from working at McCormick and Schmidt’s at the Museum of Flight. He hopes to use this experience to help El Centro and is optimistic about more community support for the program.

“Yesterday, I walked into the dining room and everyone started applauding. You get immediate feedback when you cook directly for people,” says Gary. Gary spent his 40-year cooking career behind the kitchen wall, but here at El Centro de la Raza he can see the reaction from the people he cooks for directly, everyday. The lunch crowd has also been known to give him a thumbs-up and show him their empty plates. But the most rewarding gesture from the participants is when, “They just say thank you.”

“Food is love,” he resounds. Gary loves cooking because it is spiritual, and you have to be in the present time to cook well. Gary recites a quote that he lives by in every kitchen, from one of his favorite philosophers, Alan Watts: “Cooking is the art of loving something to the point of supreme edibility.”

If you would like to schedule our catering services for an event, please call Gary at 206.957.4631.

Welcome New Staff Members

We welcome the following new staff members to El Centro:

Roxana Amaral: Executive Office, Administrative Assistant

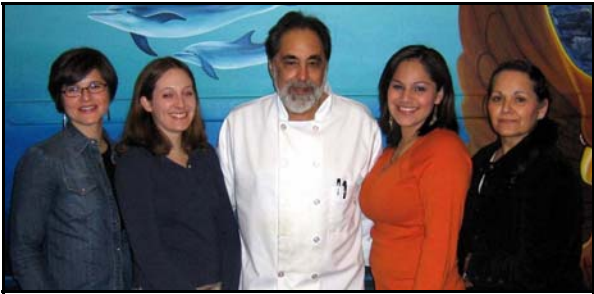
Jessica Harris: Development, Seattle University Work-study

Stephany Hazelrigg: Parent Involvement in Education, Coordinator

Dolores Ledesma: Next Generation, Case Manager

Gary Olander: La Cocina Popular, Head Chef

Stephanie Todd: Office Assistant, Seattle University Work-study (not pictured)



From left: Stephany, Jessica, Gary, Roxana, Dolores.

Next Generation is Here!

By Ashley Haugen, AmeriCorps Development Assistant

El Centro de la Raza and Children’s Home Society (CHS) have partnered to direct a program called Next Generation: A Program for Teen Parents and Their Families. Housed in the El Centro building, case managers are ready to assist pregnant teens and teenage families in taking on the challenges of teen parenting. El Centro de la Raza and Children’s Home Society will be working with eight organizations to address the issues confronting young parents and families. These organizations include: United Way, Conscious Fathering, Child and Family Commission of King County, YWCA, Public Health and King County Work Training.

El Centro and CHS, along with their partners, will work to educate male and female parents, provide classes and activities, and promote positive child and family development. Next Generation will focus on a home visit program, a fathering project, family education, work training, family involvement and outreach to pregnant Latino/Chicano teens and families with the goals of education and stabilization.

Please call 206.325.3192 for more information.



Next Generation & Adolescent Family Life staff, from left: Selena Shelley, Mysti Coccia-Eddy, Cheramy Hassen and Dolores Ledesma.

El Centro de la Raza would like to thank the following donors for January–March 2006:	United Way	Alba Patricia Coronado-Argueta
	Wells Fargo Housing Foundation (\$10,000)	Steve Cortez
<u>PUBLIC SUPPORT</u>	<u>SOCIOS \$5,000-9,999</u>	Audrey Detonancour
AmeriCorps	Puget Sound Energy (\$6,474)	Jesus Flores
City of Seattle Human Services Department	SKCCH Funding Resources Com. (\$5,400)	Maria Gomez
Early Learning Network	United Way of King County (\$5,000)	Margarita Gonzalez-Jimenez
Emergency Shelter Assistance State Prog.		Mark T. Grattan
Federal Funding	<u>PARTIDARIOS \$1,000-4,999</u>	George E. Guzmán
King County Housing & Community Development	Vulcan, Incorporated (\$2,500)	Gloria Guzmán
Seattle Housing Authority	Judy Pigott (\$1,000)	Debra K. Hannula
Seattle Public Library	<u>FAMILIA \$100-999</u>	Robert & Jean Harrison
Seattle Urban League	Anonymous	Martha & Samuel Jacobs
Seattle Step Ahead Preschools	Deborah Dewolfe & Kate Stewart	Roger & Barbara Johnson
Seattle & King County Public Health Dept.	Aurelio Gonzalez-Robles	Barbara Lampert
State of Washington Office for Community Development	Margaret Hinojosa	Ricardo Martinez
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services	Alejandro Juarez	Dale McAlister
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Dev.	Hannah Love	Audrey McCarthy
WA State Department of Communication	Juan M. Mendoza	Jeffery M. Middelton
Trade & Economic Development (CSBG)	Jocelyn R. Moore	Matthew Perez
Washington State Legislature	Constance F. Moorehead	Jill Reifschneider
	Amaya Souarez	Michelle Robles
	Rev. Chris Steele	Perfecto Rocha-Guzmán
	Marco A. Temores	Yrma Rodriquez
	Christina Torres	Michelle Ruiz
<u>VOLUNTEERS</u>	Rita Zawaideh	Jeremy Smith
Donations of time are just as important as money. Thank you to all our volunteers!	Employees of WA State Combined Fund	Carolyn Walden
	National Episcopal Urban Caucus	Alexander W. White
	St. Clement's Episcopal Church	CFC of North Puget Sound Employees
<u>¡MIL GRACIAS!</u>		Faith Lutheran Church
Thank you Kristin Houser and Mark Burke at the Law Offices of Schroeter, Goldmark & Bender for providing free, bilingual legal clinics for our clients!	<u>AMIGOS \$1-99</u>	MacDonald Miller Facility Solutions
	Anonymous (7)	
	Carissa Allen & Travis Adams	<u>IN-KIND SUPPORT</u>
	José Ayala, Jr.	Laurie Chiddix-Olson (consultant)
	Carl B. Betten	Jim Hodge, Rabanco Companies (copier)
	Herbert & Shirley Bridge	Kerry Kozuki (consultant)
<u>BENEFACTORES \$10,000+</u>	Kip & Suzanne Callahan	Bobbie Stephens (office appliances)
National Council of La Raza (\$30,000)		Lutheran Volunteer Corps (staffing support)
		SeaPrint (paper)

EL CENTRO DE LA RAZA EVENTS

Cinco de Mayo Celebration at El Centro de la Raza

Saturday, May 6, 2006 from 11AM-3PM. Coordinated by Beacon Hill Chamber of Commerce.
Sponsored by El Centro de la Raza, Java Love, Sound Transit, Obayashi Corporation, and Macy's.

Non-profit Comedy Benefit Show at Comedy Underground

Tuesday, May 23, 2006 from 8:30-10PM
Please call 206.957.4611 for more information.

Dia de los Muertos at El Centro de la Raza

Ofrenda/Altar Exhibits November 1-21, 2006
Please call 206.957.4632 if you would like to create and display an Ofrenda.

CLASSES AT EL CENTRO DE LA RAZA

Homeownership Classes & Counseling

Please call 206.957.4616 to register or to make a counseling appointment.
Spanish: First Saturday of every month, 9:45AM-3PM
English: Second Saturday of every month, 9:45AM-3PM

Financial Literacy Classes

Please call 206.957.4616 to register.
Third Saturday of every month, 10AM-12PM

ESL & Citizenship Classes

Please call 206.957.4622 for a current schedule and to register.
Schedule varies each month.

Legal Clinics

Please call 206.957.4634 to register.
March 8 & 22, April 5 & 19, May 10 & 24, 5:30PM-7PM

Senior Nutrition & Wellness Program

Please call 206.957.4643 for information.
Exercise program, lunch and other activities are offered M-F.

Infant Mortality Prevention Classes

Please call 206.957.4614 for information.

Life Skills Wage Progression Training

Please call 206.957.4607 for information.
Open to Homeless Assistance participants only.

José Martí Child Development Center

Please call 206.957.4619 for information.

Food Bank

Please call 206.957.4638 for requirements.
W 5PM-7PM, TH 10:30AM-12PM & 1:30PM-4:30PM

La Cocina Popular

Please call 206.957.4631 for information.
Free, nutritious, daily lunch M-F 12PM-1PM for homeless individuals.

*All classes offered are in Spanish and English.
Classes are located at El Centro de la Raza unless indicated otherwise.
Please call program to register and confirm room location.*

Infant Mortality Prevention Class



Hope for Youth Civil Rights Class



ESL/Citizenship Class



Financial Literacy Class



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Mission Statement

*Our mission includes ensuring access to services and advocating on behalf of people regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, level of income, age, ability and sexual orientation.
El Centro de la Raza was founded in 1972 to address the problems that people face related to poverty, literacy, health, and education.*

Building Tenants

AIDS Ministry of Ecumenical Network (AMEN)
Children's Home Society
Eli Manuel Hernandez & Angel Villalobos, Graphic Designers
Excelsior Travel Agency
IWASIL Boys & Girls Club
IWASIL Interagency School
Pacific Association for Labor Support (PALS)
Sojourner Truth Services
Sonya Joseph Photography
South Wind Native Arts, Roger Fernandez



El Centro de la Raza
The Center of the People of All Races

Please call
206.957.4601
to reserve space
for a meeting,
wedding, birth-
day party or
other events!