

César E. Chávez to be Honored During April at UCSD

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Jan Jennings

César E. Chávez Day 2008 marks the 40th anniversary of Chávez's fast for non-violence in 1968. Although his health was in danger, he refused food for 25 days in order to promote the ideals of "militant non-violence" in the struggle for economic and social justice. At a mass ending the fast, then Sen. Robert F. Kennedy broke bread with the farm workers and described Chávez as "one of the heroic figures of our time."

The University of California, San Diego will celebrate what would have been Chávez's 81st birthday (March 31) the entire month of April with diverse activities honoring Chávez - the Navy veteran, farm worker, champion of human rights, and advocate for non-violent solutions, dignity, and educational and economic opportunity for all. All events are free and open to the public.

One of the principal figures of the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Chávez co-founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962 which later became the United Farm Workers union. He died in 1993.

Activities at UC San Diego celebrating the life and accomplishments of Chávez will include a kickoff luncheon honoring local activists, a performance by Chicana actors, introduction of a new book on Chicana theatre, poetry readings, documentary films, Mexican dance, an evening with legendary L.A. activist and teacher Sal Castro, a program on Filipino farmers, and a town hall meeting on the status of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os at UCSD.

The annual *César E. Chávez Celebration Kickoff Luncheon* will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. April 1 on the International Center Patio. Alberto Ochoa and Eva Bustos Melendez will be honored for furthering César Chávez's ideals in their communities. Ochoa is chair of the Department for Policy Studies in Language and Cross Cultural Education at San Diego State University and chair of the San Diego County Latino Education Coalition. He has worked to provide equal opportunities for Latino students in county schools.

Melendez, a 1983 UCSD graduate in communication, is fundraiser, event planner, sponsor and community liaison for the Latino Journalists of California, San Diego Chapter of the California Chicano News Media Association. She has a leading role in CCNMA's promotion of diversity in the news media and encouragement of Latinos pursuing careers in journalism.

Also recognized at the kickoff luncheon will be Gracia Molina de Pick, an activist in the international feminist movement and life-long proponent of educational reform - especially for Latinos and Chicanos.

On April 15, the documentary film, *On the Edge: The Femicide in Ciudad Juarez*, will be screened at 7 p.m. in Center Hall, Room 105. Artist and filmmaker Steev Hise directs this film which explores the social, cultural, and economic factors that led to the brutal, and yet unpunished murders of more than 400 young women in Ciudad Juarez, a border town across the Rio Bravo from El Paso. A discussion will follow.

Teatro Chicana, the performance and the book, will be presented at 5 p.m. April 17 at the Cross-Cultural Center. Chicana actors and writers will discuss their new book, *Teatro Chicana*, and perform a representative Chicana skit. Musicians Chunky Sanchez and Ricardo Felix will perform.

On April 18, *UCSD Grad Students Present Herman Baca* at a 5:30 p.m. dinner in the Price Center, Gallery A. History grad student Jimmy Patino will introduce Baca, a civil rights activist for more than 40 years, who worked closely with Chávez, as well as other Chicano leaders. Baca's Chicano civil rights papers are archived in the UCSD Mandeville Special Collections Library. Chávez T-shirts will be available for a donation.

Manongs in the Fields will be presented by Marissa Pulido Rebaya, cofounder of Agbayani Village Pilgrimage Organizing Committee, at noon April 24 at the Cross-Cultural Center. Rebaya will discuss the social conditions impacting the *manongs*, the Filipino farmers in America, and the coalition building which led to landmark union contracts.

On April 28, *The Status of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os at UCSD* will be discussed at a town hall meeting at 4:45 p.m. in the Student Services Multi-purpose Room. A panel of UCSD faculty, staff, and students will discuss past and present relationships between the La Jolla campus and California's Spanish-speaking communities. Among questions raised will be: To what extent are UCSD policy-makers serving the state's fastest growing population?

Other activities in the monthlong salute to César E. Chávez, which has been organized by the 2008 César E. Chávez Celebration Planning Committee, include:

The 10th Annual César E. Chávez Commemorative Community Breakfast, 7 a.m. March 27 at the San Diego Convention Center. The event will honor the Chávez legacy in the San Diego region and recognize high school essay contest winners.

The Writing's on the Wall at 7 p.m. April 4 at the Price Center Theatre will feature spoken words by poets Mark Gonzalez, Liza Garza, Amir Sulaiman and DJ Kuttin Kandi. Their message is to build unity and bridge communities affected by borders.

The School of Medicine Border Health Project at 6:30 p.m. April 16 in the Skaggs Building Educational Auditorium will include a discussion, singing, and storytelling by medical students who run a project that provides medical care and education to local migrant workers.

The HBO production *Walkout* will screen at 6 p.m. April 22 in the Student Services Multi-purpose Room. The film tells the story of Chicana/o students in Los Angeles, who in 1968, led a movement for school reform and improved educational opportunities. High school teacher Sal Castro, who supported the students, will participate in a discussion following the screening.

Dancing in Mexico, 6 p.m. April 23 at the Cross-Cultural Center. Members of UCSD's *Danza Azteca* and *Ballet Folklorico La Joya* will perform.

Made in L.A. will screen at 7 p.m. April 29 in Center Hall, Room 105. The film is the story of three garment workers' struggle to win basic labor rights for Latina and Asian workers. Joann Lo, a lead organizer featured in the film, will participate in a discussion following the screening.

Professor Jorge Mariscal, director of the UCSD Chicana/o-Latina/o Arts and Humanities Program (CLAH), is chairing the 2008 César E. Chávez Celebration Planning Committee. For further information, call the CLAH office at (858) 822-4059.

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