

Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County

2017 Annual Report

The LCA's mission

The Board has embarked on a re-examination of our mission to update and redefine more clearly and succinctly our priorities. As it stands, it currently states:

Our mission is to provide a vehicle for the social, cultural, educational, and civic expression of the Latino community in Tompkins County and surrounding areas, empower Latino residents to help themselves in terms of knowledge, community relations, and political involvement; develop programs and services geared to strengthen our Latino heritage and to promote cultural pride and awareness.

In the process of re-writing that statement and our vision, we are discussing the values that underpin everything the Association does. All members are welcome to attend the monthly meetings and join in these discussions.

Activities

A. Civic activities

- We participated Upstate Latino Summit, which this year was organized in Utica on October 11 by the Mohawk Valley Latino Association. Participants included Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, representatives from Hispanics United (Buffalo), Ibero American Action League (Rochester), La Liga Spanish Action League (Syracuse), Centro Cívico of Amsterdam and Albany as well as from the NYS Office of New Americans, the U.S. Small Business Administration, NYS Department of State Division of Affirmative Action Programs, NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute, NYS Department of Health Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention, the Greater Utica Chamber of Commerce, the Workers' Justice Center, k-12 and higher educational institutions, as well as individual businesspersons, academics, immigration attorneys, activists and volunteers.
 - We are reaching out to small business owners in our community with a view to organize a meeting with a representative of the Small Business Administration, a federal agency, in 2018, to discuss loan opportunities, counseling sessions and other forms of assistance they can provide to small businesses. We are putting together a list of interested persons. If you might interested (no commitment necessary at this point), please let us know. Though we would facilitate the meeting, the opportunity is not limited only to Latinos.
 - We have submitted our candidacy to host the summit in 2022.

- **Immigration**

Immigration issues affect or can affect many members of our community, documented, undocumented and citizens. We live within the 100 mile strip from the border wherein there are limitations to protections against random and arbitrary stops and searches and racial profiling, though illegal, happens.

- Two of the members of the Board are members of the Steering Committee of the Immigrant Rights Coalition of Tompkins County.
 - § We participated in the organization of Natalia Serna's concert Corazón Norte on February 26, which raised awareness of the challenges the federal government's actions pose for undocumented migrants in our community and raised funds for the IRCTC.
 - § We also participated in a dry run of the Rapid Response Team.
- As we have since 2012, we organized, with Finger Lakes Community Health, the visit of the Mexican consulate to Sodus. Other agencies attending included the NYS Department of Labor, Legal Aid Society of Rochester, Workers Justice Center and Workers Center of Central NY. Over 190 persons attended to request Mexican passports, consular ID's, birth certificates, and Mexican electoral IDs. All of them and approximately 400 other persons accompanying them were also offered services that included medical consultations, blood pressure, HIV and diabetes screenings, intake interviews for immigration legal services, and labor and occupational health and safety consultations.
- The Guatemalan Consulate cancelled its annual visit to this area, which members of the Board have helped to organize for many years, due to concerns regarding the safety of Guatemalan migrants.
- We participated in the promotion of the *Green Light Driving Together Campaign* which is spearheaded regionally by the Workers' Center of Central New York and Workers' Justice Center. The campaign requests NYS to allow people to apply for drivers' licenses regardless of immigration status because it will improve the safety of our roads, improve interactions with law enforcement, create a more level playing field for local employers, and allow workers who are already part of our community to access health and educational resources, banks and local businesses for themselves and their families.
- In coordination with the Multicultural Resource Center, a member of the Board organized an ICE Out of Ithaca rally on May 3.
- Three members of the Board spoke at a protest against the rescission of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) called by Cornell's Dream Team on September 8.

- **Response to the hurricane María in Puerto Rico**

- Deaths attributed to the hurricane and its aftermath are estimated to be above 1,000, and the majority of the island still lacks access to clean drinking water and electric power.
- We have organized and participated in a variety of efforts to raise funds and donations for Puerto Rico, on our own and in coordination with other organizations. Funds have been sent to recipients selected by fundraiser organizers.
 - We raised \$1,645.00.
 - One of the members of our Board travelled privately to Puerto Rico and reported about the situation there and the effectiveness of the assistance that is sent to different kinds of organizations. As a result, we determined to send \$500.00 of the funds we raised to Comedores Sociales and Lights and Water Filters for Puerto Rico and \$150 to buy toys.

- We supported Sally Ramirez, Denice Karamardian, and Colleen Cattau's concert *El Coquí Siempre Canta*, which raised \$4,215.00 and assisted them in sending funds to individual families in Puerto Rico, Arecibo Observatory Staff Aid Gofundme crowdfunding effort and ResilientPowerPR.
- We collected in-kind donations for NYS's Empire State Relief and Recovery Effort for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands campaign and made three deliveries of good to the NYS National Guard in Binghamton, from where they were sent to Puerto Rico.
- We participated in two events organized by a member of the Board at Agava, which raised \$508.00.
- We participated in the Ithaca Asian American Association's Fall Dragon Boat Race, which raised funds that were sent by IAAA to Fundacion Comunitaria de Puerto Rico.
- A member of the Board created a registry of volunteers that will continue to help communities in the island in 2018.
- We are working with Catholic Charities and the volunteers mentioned above to support two families Catholic Charities have brought over and 58 undergradates that will be attending Cornell.
- Members of the Board met with Mayor Svante Myrick in December of 2016, President Martha Pollack of Cornell on May 17, 2017 and President Shirley Collado of Ithaca College on September 25.
- As every year, we provided assistance to individuals who seek orientation when they arrive or help to deal with unexpected or unmanageable situations.

B. Cultural programming

- We supported ¡Cultura! Ithaca's programs, which included
 - *Root Map* collaborative theater production (March 2)
 - *Gimme CULTURA* and *Café con CULTURA* Spanish language groups (Spring)
 - *Boalian* theater workshop (March 18)
 - *FLANdango* (March 25)
 - *Poesía de Justicia* Latinx poetry event (April 15)
 - *Jardín Comunitario* at the Ithaca Community Garden (May 21)
 - *Cinco de mayo* at Streets Alive (April 30)
 - *Mini Balcón Criollo* art exhibit (Ithaca, October 6 - November 17 and Syracuse)
 - *Cine con CULTURA* film festival (September 19 - October 12)
 - *Ithaca Has Latin Roots* Latin@ Heritage Month Kickoff Party (September 15)
 - *Día de los muertos* First Friday Gallery night (November 3)

C. Educational activities

- The Cecilia Montaner Vargas Scholarship was not awarded due to lack of applicants. The call for applications and application materials were sent to all high schools in Tompkins County. Next year we will seek applications more proactively.

D. Social activities

- As is now traditional, we organized a picnic in the summer, which took place in Stewart Park on August 5 and a holiday party in December, which will take place in the Greenstar Space on December 16. We thank Victor Rosa for supplying the CDs that were awarded to the winners of the raffle we held to raise funds.

E. CNY Latino

- We have continued to publish a monthly page in the CNY Latino, albeit with interruptions due serious illnesses in the family of the Board member who prepares the page.

F. Website

- We created a website at <www.lca-of-tc.org> with sections for
 - Home
 - § Mission
 - § Upcoming Events
 - § Current Announcements
 - § Board of Directors
 - Scholarship
 - Resources: I need to find
 - § Legal Aid
 - ❖ Immigration
 - ❖ Other Matters
 - § Health
 - § Consulates
 - § Education
 - § Work and Occupational Safety
 - § Women, Children, Family and Seniors
 - Latino Culture
 - § LCA Partners and Other Latino Cultural Organizations
 - § Latino Radio Programs and Newspaper
 - § LCA Partners and Other Latino Cultural Organizations
 - Living in Tompkins
 - § Welcome to Tompkins County: Basic Information
 - § Latino Business Directory
 - § Other Latino Groups in Upstate
 - Becoming a U.S. Citizen
 - § Learning English
 - § Becoming a US Citizen
 - § Voting, Civil and Human Rights

G. Governance

- Members of the Board and a member of the community met with legal counsel from Law NY to learn about and discuss the legal limitations the IRS puts on lobbying activities of 501(c)(3) organizations like ours. All members of the Association were invited to attend.

H. Embezzlement

- The reimbursement of the \$6,425.75 embezzled in 2015 continues under the management of the Tompkins County Department of Probation and Community Justice. A total of \$753.32 have been reimbursed to December 8. \$5,672.43 are still outstanding. A letter has been sent to the Department of Probation and Community Justice expressing our deep concern regarding the amounts being paid.
- We have fully reimbursed ¡Cultura! Ithaca and Books for Bolivia for the losses they suffered as a result of the embezzlement. In addition to fulfilling a moral obligation, this will allow us

to focus our fundraising efforts on rebuilding our finances, improving our programming capabilities and, once our finances are solid enough, to rent an office space.

I. Fundraising

- Fundraising efforts included direct appeals to our membership, raffles at the summer picnic and the holiday celebration and participation in the Giving is Gorges campaign.
- We are grateful to our donors, partners, sponsors and supporters:
 - § Alcance Latino
 - § American Crafts by Robbie Dein
 - § Flor Ardón
 - § Ballet Folklorico de Ithaca
 - § Nicole Benoit
 - § CNY Latino
 - § Deborah Castillo
 - § Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga Counties
 - § Chili's
 - § Community Arts Partnership
 - § Kevin Cruz
 - § ¡Cultura! Ithaca
 - § Alina Díaz
 - § Dream Team Cornell
 - § Engaged Cornell
 - § Finger Lakes Community Health
 - § Illume Projects, LLC
 - § Immigrant Rights Coalition of Tompkins County
 - § Ithaca Asian American Association
 - § Just a Taste
 - § Latino Studies Program, Ithaca College
 - § Latino Studies Program, Cornell University
 - § Latin American Studies Program, Cornell University
 - § Legal Assistance of Western NY
 - § Michael Luis Ristorucci
 - § Multicultural Resource Center
 - § No Más Lágrimas
 - § Old Mexico
 - § Daniel Molina
 - § Christian Nielsen
 - § Azucena Ortega
 - § Mar Pérez
 - § Puerto Rico Student Association
 - § Rasa Spa
 - § Ritmo Latino Radio
 - § Patricia Rodríguez
 - § Víctor Rosas
 - § Saint John's Episcopal Church of Sodus
 - § Beverly Sirvent
 - § Taste of Thai Express
 - § The Law Offices of Jose Perez
 - § Tompkins County Tourism Program
 - § Various Depts. at Cornell University & Ithaca College

§ Héctor y Josie Vélez
§ Josie Vélez
§ Tompkins County Workers' Center

**And to all the volunteers who worked with us
to make this work possible, many thanks!**