

HONORING ANA IBARRA AS 2023 VALLEY LUCHADORA FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. TONY CÁRDENAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ana Ibarra, also known as “Doña Ana”, as a Valley Luchadora. Doña Ana is the founder and owner of Pozolería Doña Ana.

Ana was born and raised in Nayarit, Mexico, and came to the United States 44 years ago at the age of 18. With only a middle school education, Ana began her business in her living room in Panorama City, selling a popular Mexican dish, pozole.

Despite struggling with depression, Doña Ana found motivation to pursue the American dream and open her own small business.

Despite three localities denying her the license to open her restaurant, she persevered and is now located in the heart of Panorama City. Today, she has brought people from all over the United States to try her meals and bring people together through her food.

Doña Ana is the embodiment of the American dream and our community’s ‘si se puede’ mantra.

Since her one-year anniversary she shared through her restaurant funds, she has been able to send donations to over 300 children in Mexico because she remembers her humble beginnings.

It is this same spirit of generosity that she has taught to her family-owned restaurant and customers. Today, Doña Ana feeds any homeless person that enters her restaurant because she believes “a nadie se le niega un taco,” which loosely translates to “you don’t deny anyone food.”

I thank Ana. It is my honor to recognize her as a distinguished leader and luchador during Hispanic Heritage Month.

RECOGNIZING LIFE DIRECTIONS

HON. RASHIDA TLAI

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Ms. TLAI. Mr. Speaker, today I want to honor Life Directions, a community-based organization whose mission is to motivate young adults, to mature into responsible, productive adults through self-direction, as they celebrate fifty years of service.

Life Directions was founded in Detroit in 1973 when five like-minded individuals, Alexander and Judith MacDonald, Reverend John Phelps, Sister Rosalie Esquerra, and Reverend Alex Steinmiller, came together in search of community-based solution to combat increasing rates of violence in impoverished areas of the city that was impacting and taking the lives of young people. From these initial meetings, Life Directions peer mentorship programming was born. Eventually Life Directions’ programs such as Peer Motivation, Peer Mentor and other enrichment programs were offered in schools to help teens and young adults navigate better solutions and become peace builders in their communities.

The Life Directions Programs were established in Detroit, Tucson, New Orleans, Chi-

cago, and San Antonio. To date, Life Directions combined programs, Peer Motivation, Peer Mentor, Neighborhood Enrichment, focus: Life Retreats, Focus Family, Enfoque la familia, Women Bridging Change and Men Bridging Change has reached over 180,000 youth and young adults.

Please join me in recognizing Life Directions’ commitment to building a brighter future for young people, as they celebrate fifty years.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF TURKISH REPUBLIC DAY

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, today I stand to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Turkish Republic Day, a significant milestone that encapsulates a century of the Turkish people’s dedication to resilience, progress, and liberty. This is not just a celebration of Turkey’s freedom but also a testament to the enduring friendship between the United States and Turkey, allies whose shared values lay the foundation for a bright future.

Central to our relationship is the substantial economic partnership that we have cultivated. This bilateral relationship extends across critical sectors including defense, energy, and commerce. It is within this sphere of trade and investment that both nations encounter vast untapped potential, promising mutual prosperity.

We engage in a strong trade relationship, exchanging billions of dollars annually worth of essential goods. Turkey ranks as a key market for American enterprises, while Turkish investments on American soil continue to spur job creation and innovation, enriching our local communities.

We recognize that our commercial relationship, albeit robust, has room for growth. Turkey’s strategic location, bordering countries across the Eurasian region, positions it as a pivotal ally for U.S. interests now more than ever. Turkey is an attractive destination for foreign direct investment and economic collaboration, particularly in emerging sectors like technology, renewable energy, and healthcare.

As we mark Turkey’s centennial Republic Day, it is incumbent upon us to recommit to nurturing this partnership. By emboldening our economic ties and exploring collaborative ventures, we can co-create a pathway towards sustained economic vitality and security. This celebration is not just about reflecting on Turkey’s admirable past; it’s about forging ahead, side by side, towards a prosperous and peaceful future.

I extend heartfelt Republic Day greetings to the Turkish people. Here’s to a friendship that, built on mutual respect and common aspirations, will continue to flourish for generations.

HONORING JULIETA GARCIA AS 2023 VALLEY LUCHADORA FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. TONY CÁRDENAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Julieta Garcia as a Valley Luchadora. Julieta is a compassionate woman who saw a need in her community and decided to act. Born in Sinaloa Mexico, Julieta migrated to Los Angeles, California in 1968 where she decided to pursue the American Dream.

She worked hard to make it in this country, overcoming many obstacles to initiate a long career in post-secondary education.

In 1981, she opened a vocational school that provided injured workers with career focused training.

To many, that is a summation of a life’s work—but not for Julieta. After retiring, she decided to give even more to her community.

In 2015, she founded Plaza Comunitaria Sinaloa (PCS), a non-profit dedicated to empowering the immigrant community through adult education. Her belief in the power of education is the driving force to empower a whole community.

Julieta and her family, Julie and Jaqueline, help people just like my parents, Andres and Maria Cárdenas, who emigrated from Mexico with a first and second grade level education, to learn English, learn to use computers, get their GED, pass their citizenship exam, and provide mental health and domestic violence prevention workshops.

Plaza Comunitaria Sinaloa grew by word of mouth from the comadres network.

As many of us know, a comadres network is an informal group of mothers in the community connecting others with vital information and resources.

Julieta has partnered with various neighborhood councils, businesses, and foundations.

With the support of the community, PCS has grown tremendously since 2021 and continues to expand programs and services based on community needs, priorities, and values.

I thank Julieta. It is my honor to recognize her as a distinguished community leader and luchadora during this Hispanic Heritage Month.

RECOGNIZING JANICE MCDONALD

HON. JASON CROW

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Janice McDonald for her decades of service to the Cherry Creek School District, City of Aurora, and surrounding communities.

A Colorado native, Janice graduated from East High School in Denver before moving with her husband to Aurora in 1957. All five of their children and fourteen of their grandchildren attended Cherry Creek Schools.

Over the years, Janice dedicated much of her time and energy to giving back to children and her community. At Ponderosa High School, she served as the Vice President and

President of the Parent Teacher Community Organization and represented the school on the Parents Council. Janice also served on the School Accountability Committee and started several multi-cultural programs at Prairie Middle School. Each month, she would offer a presentation to students about diverse cultures, countries, and industries. She also developed a student-adult mentoring program specifically geared toward young African American students.

In November 2015, Janice was elected to the Cherry Creek School Board of Education as the first African-American woman to serve in that role. As the representative for District B, she prioritized strengthening community involvement and focused on closing the achievement gap for all students. With her vast personal and professional experience in the district, she wanted to give back to a community that she believed had served her children and family well.

On October 9, 2023, Janice delivered final remarks during her final board meeting as a Cherry Creek School District Board Member. In part they read:

“In retrospect, I have been afforded the opportunity to serve eight years. An opportunity that I haven’t taken for granted. I truly believe to whom much has been given, much is required. I have been committed. When my five children came through the district I wanted the best for them, now my grandchildren. I want the best for them as well, but beyond my personal desires, I have truly wanted the best for all students.” Her parting advice was to “Let the agenda always support what’s best for the children in every deliberation.”

Janice’s colleagues also offered remarks in honor of her service and to pay tribute to her unwavering focus on the children and her well-known and often-asked line, “How are the children?”

I commend and thank Janice for her decades of service to the community, including eight years of service to the Cherry Creek School District. As she begins her retirement, may Janice’s experience and commitment to service leave a lasting legacy on the students, faculty, and the Board in the years ahead.

HONORING THE LONGEST SERVING
MAYOR OF LAS CRUCES MAYOR
KEN MIYAGISHIMA

HON. GABE VASQUEZ

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mayor Ken Miyagishima on the occasion of his retirement and to recognize his work as a public servant who has tirelessly represented Las Cruces as Mayor for 16 years. The longest serving mayor in the city’s history.

Mayor Miyagishima moved from Mississippi to Las Cruces at the age of eight. He attended New Mexico State University in Las Cruces and graduated in 1985. In 1992, at 28, he became the first American of Japanese-Mexican descent to be elected to public office in New Mexico when he became Commissioner for Doña Ana County.

In 2001, he was elected to the Las Cruces City Council, serving until 2007. Mr.

Miyagishima was later elected mayor of Las Cruces, becoming the first person of Japanese and Mexican descent to be elected mayor. Following this election, he became only the second person in Doña Ana County’s history to have been elected both as Chairman of the Doña Ana County Commission and the Mayor of Las Cruces. As Mayor, Ken was an advocate for our youth, spearheaded the growth of our city, and brought forth generational change to our city.

Throughout Mayor Miyagishima’s more than 30 years of public service, he has served with integrity and courage, fought to improve the lives of Las Cruces, and elevated our city at the national level. Mayor Miyagishima received the 2002 Commander’s Award for Public Service from the Department of the Army and the 2016 Antonio Villaraigosa Award.

On behalf of the great people of New Mexico’s 2nd Congressional District, I thank Mayor Ken Miyagishima for his life of service to Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. His work has made his community and New Mexico a stronger and more equitable community. We wish him well in his next chapter.

HONORING MANNY FLORES AS 2023
VALLEY LUCHADOR FOR HIS-
PANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. TONY CÁRDENAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Manny Flores as a Valley Luchador. Manny Flores is the Executive Director for North Valley Caring Services.

Throughout the last decade, he has played a key role at North Valley Caring Services.

Manny was impacted by the criminal justice system where he found a new path and began his commitment to help others find theirs.

Through his hard work and dedication to his community and his faith in God, he transformed a small non-profit organization into a powerhouse that helps many Valley families.

Their programs include a food pantry, hot meals for families living in motels, a Safe Parking program for the unhoused, and homeless outreach.

During the pandemic, demand for NVCS services exploded as more people found themselves housing insecure, food insecure, and job insecure. Manny led the NVCS team as they rose to meet the challenge, expanding services like their food bank to help 4,000 families, ten times the number of families they fed pre-pandemic. He and his team worked tirelessly to ensure that families in need got the food and essential goods they needed during the public health emergency.

They organized drive-thru food banks at their headquarters at the North Hills United Methodist Church, and lines would wrap around Sepulveda Boulevard and Nordhoff Street.

They even took the drive-thru food bank to other locations such as Sun Valley and Van Nuys.

They mastered the logistical skill of organizing drive-thru food pantries with volunteer power.

Manny, the NVCS team, and the volunteers under his leadership have changed countless lives in our community.

Manny is a shining example of a Luchador who helped his community in the most difficult circumstances.

Unfortunately, he lost his son Joseph Flores this year. Joseph was one of Manny’s most dedicated volunteers.

Even with this loss, Manny honors his son every day by supporting the families in his community that need support.

I thank Manny for his countless years of public service. It is my honor to recognize him as a distinguished community leader and luchador during Hispanic Heritage Month.

RECOGNIZING TURKEY’S 100TH AN-
NIVERSARY AND JAZZ DIPLO-
MACY

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize a historic milestone, the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey.

One remarkable aspect of Turkey’s presence in the United States is the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C. Over the years, the Embassy has played a vital role in enhancing cultural diplomacy and fostering friendships between our nations. Notably, the Turkish Embassy’s dedication to hosting jazz events has left an indelible mark on our cultural landscape. Jazz, a truly American art form, has found a welcoming home within the walls of the Turkish Embassy. These events have transcended mere musical performances; they have served as bridges connecting hearts and minds across cultures, and continue to prove the non-negligible, connecting nature of music.

At the height of Jim Crow segregation in the U.S., the Turkish Embassy’s jazz concerts in the 1930’s and 1940’s were significant during the anti-racism struggle. At this time, Black Americans were not allowed to sit next to whites in many places like restaurants and concert halls. Yet, the Turkish Embassy in Washington broke down prejudice and barriers by opening their doors to Black jazz musicians. Münir Ertegun, Turkey’s second ambassador to the U.S. who served between 1934 and 1944, and his two sons, Ahmet and Nesuhi—also the founders of the top recording company Atlantic Records—challenged racism in the U.S. by inviting African American jazz performers to the Turkish Embassy for concerts and jam sessions in Washington, D.C. during these years. These Embassy concerts featured iconic performers like Lois Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Teddy Wilson, and Lester Young. These groundbreaking gatherings showed the potential of jazz diplomacy. The Ertegun brothers went further by organizing Washington’s first integrated concert in 1942 at the Jewish Community Center on 16th Street. Some described the powerful imagery of two Muslim men bringing Black music to a Jewish-owned institution. This desegregation through music and culture launched a legacy worth recognizing.

Turkey’s efforts extend far beyond its musical contributions to the global community and the United States. It has been a source of inspiration for countless individuals, including African American writers like James Baldwin. Baldwin, whose literary brilliance continues to