

# Pride In Stride

Poder Latino holds integral position in LGBTQ community

For the past 15 years, the individuals at Poder Latino have put their best foot forward to help out those less fortunate. As a nonprofit organization, the group produces colorful, sassy and scintillating showcases, all devoted to raising funds for one person in the community per year who, for one reason or another, is in need.

Israel Cruz, 37, has been with Poder Latino for the past six years, and as the organization's president, he can attest that though their fundraising capacities and scope aren't as large as other nonprofits, the mission is just as big. Through events like the Sunday Latino Nights at Embers and their annual Mr. and Miss Gay Poder Latino pageants, Poder Latino links the community to LGBT Latinos, lots of drag and even more music. Proceeds from this year's events will help ease the medical costs of April Bablo, a Portland resident who's been diagnosed with cancer.

"We look for the person who needs it the most," says Cruz, emphasizing that beneficiaries need not be Latino, or LGBT.

Portland Latino Gay Pride chair David Martinez says Poder Latino is an important part of the Latino LGBT community, noting that several Mr. and Miss Gay Poder Latino titleholders have performed dur-

ing past Latino Gay Pride festivals.

"They do a great job of bringing [the] community out," Martinez says. "For some people, it's the only chance they get to have fun, let loose and be among the Latino LGBT community, both Spanish speaking and with similar life experiences."

Martinez cites the particular cultural impact of Poder Latino's annual pageant productions.

"They challenge the strict Latino gender roles and cultural expectations, and broaden our community's understanding of who we are," Martinez explains.

With this year's pageants slated for the fall at Embers—dates could not be confirmed as of press time—Cruz and Poder Latino hope to continue their philanthropic efforts, and welcome all to take part.

"We're a Latino organization, but we're open to help anywhere," Cruz says. "If people want to join us, too, you don't need to be Latino. As long as you're willing to help, everybody's welcome."

*For more information about Poder Latino, and for updates on this year's Mr. and Miss Gay Poder Latino, search "Poder Latino Oregon" on Facebook.*

—RYAN J. PRADO



## Voice of the MAX

Enrique Andrade is going places, along with you

Those who aren't native Spanish speakers might not realize this, but the voice of the Spanish announcer on the Portland MAX light rail is incredibly sexy.

That voice—the one that tells you "puertas a la derecha"—belongs to Enrique Andrade, 38, a voice artist and an active member in Portland's LGBTQ Latino community.

"The sexy voice, that's a gift, I guess," Andrade says when asked about the compliment. "I haven't explored the [phone sex] lines—I would rather sound sexy in a commercial or on a public transportation system."

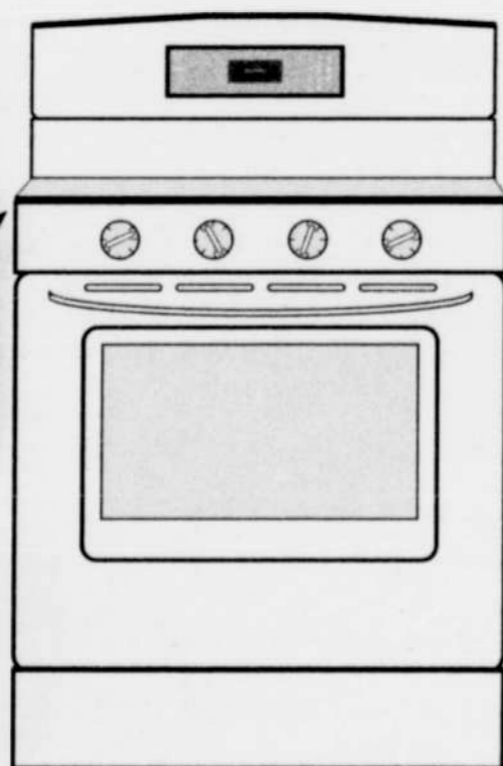
In addition to Andrade's work for transit agency TriMet, which runs the

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