

KT on KMUZ: On-air with founders of the Latino Action Committee

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

In 2018, 18 graduating seniors at McNary High School strode into the next chapter of their lives with \$150 scholarships from Keizer's Latino Action Committee, a small group of local leaders looking to provide a megaphone to Latino voices.

For City Councilor Roland Herrera, it was a moment worth savoring. Not simply because he'd been able to put a little good back into the world, but because of who else was in attendance — every single other city councilor.

"That was the best I'd ever felt about Keizer coming together and, as a former city employee, it was really, really needed. We're going to do better yet, but we're working on it," Herrera said.

This year, the LAC will do it all again on May 9, and the group already has the backing of a \$2,000 matching grant from a community donor.

Herrera and Rev. Jose Dominguez of Luz Del Valle joined me in the studio Friday, March 8, for an on-air interview to talk about the work of the LAC and their hopes for the future of the organization. You can listen to the whole segment on the *Keizertimes* Facebook page, but the conversation is one we wanted to preserve in print as well.

The scholarships are one of the many ways that lift up the local Latino community, but the gesture fits into the goals of the LAC in other ways.

"I spoke with Chief [John] Teague [of the Keizer Police Department] and expressed concern about the need for officers who are Latino or speak Spanish. He's said there aren't any candidates out there and we want to change that. How can students begin to engage in that. We believe that there are qualified, skilled and educated Latinos for these jobs," Dominguez said.



Two of the Latino Action Committee Founders, City Councilor Roland Herrera and Rev. Jose Dominguez, in the KMUZ studio Friday, March 8.

guez said. Making sure McNary students know that there is a community behind them that believes in them and wants them to succeed is the real goal of the scholarship program. That extends to the families of the graduates, who are sometimes the first in their family to achieve that milestone. "We want to help the families look at their son or daughter in a different way," Dominguez said. The members of the LAC aren't limiting their work to students, or even Latinos, either. Last year, when the Keizer City Council urged the leadership of Keizer United, a networking group for nonprofits, to find other ways to supply meals than

a grant supplied by the city, the LAC provided lunch for the next month's meeting.

The LAC invited Teague and representatives of the Oregon State Police and Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to speak at Luz Del Valle in an effort to bridge the seeming divides that permeate relations between Latino communities and public safety organizations. When looking for a space to host the scholarship ceremony, the Keizer Civic Center was chosen specifically because it would mean attendees had the opportunity to change their view of what is done in the building. "People say that Latinos only visit city hall to pay their

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Quilt Show moves to Armory

Mid-Valley Quilt Guild (MVQG) will transform the Salem Armory into a display space for its biennial quilt show in a new location on April 18, 19 and 20.

Show hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 18 and 19, and 10 to 4 p.m. on April 20.

Marge McCanse, the year's featured quilter, and her daughters will provide a multi-generational presentation on quilting, fabric and pattern design and their experiences and careers in textile industry.

This year's raffle quilt, "Enchanted Bouquets" was pieced and hand appliqued by guild members including Joyce Bolles from Keizer and quilted by Cynthia Shaw of Keizer and is valued at \$6,000.

The show will include vendors from across the region offering fabrics, patterns, kits, a basket walk and silent auction. Each attendee will receive a raffle ticket the Basket Walk chock full of local food, floral and fun. Additional raffle tickets will also be on sale. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5.

The Armory is located at 2310 17th Street N.E., in Salem.

Although this event is sponsored by the Mid-Valley Quilt Guild, *Fabracadabra the Magic of Quilting* will highlight the work of local and regional quilters as our first quilt show open to non-guild members. Quilts and quilted items will be on display for sale in a variety of categories including traditional, modern and art quilt.

MVQG is an organization dedicated to all aspects of the quilting art. Money raised is used to fund grants offered to non-profits engaged in promoting quilting, especially focused on those involving youth



the city that haven't been involved before. Diversity is not a bad word and there's nothing wrong with having multicultural people at the top."

More important, he said, is the effect of minority representation reflected in civic life. When a child can see themselves in a role, other opportunities come into focus.

"When young Latinos have Latino teachers, they excel," said Dominguez.

For all the good the group is trying to do, Herrera said reading the applications of student scholars is bittersweet.

"Some of the letters the students write ... about having to work [to provide for the family] or hating summer because you have to work. We grew up in this system and knowing what it's like to go to a bunch of different schools. I know what it felt like to feel alone," Herrera said. "One of our students ended up with a full ride to Stanford [University]. My heart was so proud. We are moving in the right direction, but we have to keep at it."

Donations to the LAC scholarship fund can be sent to: LDV-LAC, 606 Dearborn Avenue .E., Keizer, OR, 97303. Those with concerns the LAC might be able help with or looking for information about the LAC can call 503-689-1652. LAC meetings are held at 9 a.m. the third Thursday of every month at Luz Del Valle.

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