

EL OBSERVADOR

'La Casa Latina' Opens at Portland State

New center supports Latino success

"La Casa Latina," a support center at Portland State University for Latino students, located adjacent to PSU's Multicultural Center, opened this month in a ceremony with 150 visitors.

The room, designed to be an inviting meeting place for Latino students to study and meet with advisors and mentors, is a product of "¡Éxito!" an initiative begun in 2009 to advance Latino student success at PSU.

The task force recommended construction of the support center as one of several ways the university could help the Latino student population. The new space will have a staff person and is filled with original art, comfortable furniture and three new computer stations.

"The space is a wonderful thing,



A three-panel mural designed by student artists depicts Latinos progressing from migrant labor to college life and academic success at the new 'La Casa Latina,' at Portland State University.

but it's only a visual manifestation of the many programs we're promoting for Latino success,"

said PSU President Wim Wiewel during the grand opening ceremony.

In addition to opening La Casa Latina, other goals of ¡Éxito! include doubling the number of

Latino faculty, advisors and administrators at PSU, offering bilingual family orientation, and providing more scholarships for Latino students.

Latinos make up 20 percent of students in Oregon's public schools, and are the fastest growing population in Oregon. PSU's Latino student population is about 1,600. Boosting the number of Latino college students is one of the goals of ¡Éxito!, which is Spanish for "success."

The grand opening came a day after the demise of a proposed law in the Oregon Legislature, which would have allowed the non-U.S.-born children of illegal immigrants to pay in-state tuition at Oregon's seven public universities.

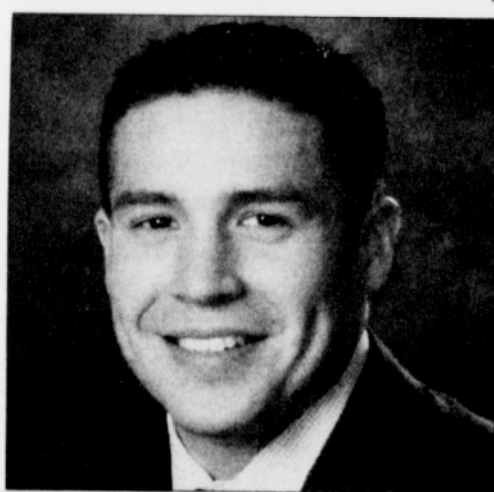
Wiewel encouraged the crowd to look on the positive side, saying the support of the bill by PSU and the Latino community was a great organizing effort that can bring the issue of "tuition equity" for Latino students to the national level.

Young Professional Helps Chamber

Roberto Flores has been welcomed as a new member of the Board of Directors of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, a group started in 1994 to support the economic advancement of northwest Latinos.

Flores is an account executive for BlueCross BlueShield in Portland and a graduate of Portland State University. He also completed the Hispanic Chamber's year long leadership program.

"Roberto brings business exper-



Roberto Flores

tise and a young professional's perspective that will be helpful as we continue to reach out to young professionals in our community. Roberto was raised in Gervais. He is a lifelong Oregonian dedicated to helping improve the quality of life for all Oregonians. We are pleased that he has joined us," said Jerry Petty, the Hispanic Chamber Board chair.

For more information about the Hispanic Chamber programs and events visit hmccoregon.com.

Hispanic Chamber Receives Grant

The Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber received a \$30,000 grant to build capacity and increase the number of businesses and students served.

The donation from the Donald H. Frank Fund and the Christine and C.F. Swigert Jr. Fund II of the Oregon Community Foundation will help the chamber support its technical assistance to Latino and other small businesses, and build scholarships for Latino students statewide.

The foundation works with individuals, families, businesses and organizations to create charitable funds to support community causes.

To learn more about the Hispanic Chamber programs and events, visit hmccoregon.com

Latino Leadership Cultivated

Michelle House of the United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has been accepted into the rigorous, yearlong Latino Leadership Program through the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber.

Each year, a class of approximately 20 individuals, participate in a 12 month program to develop the leadership and management skills of promising Latinos in the Portland community.

"We are honored to have one of our staff members chosen to be a part of this rigorous leadership program that does such a wonderful job of fostering the talents our future Latino leaders," said Jay Bloom, interim President and CEO for United Way of the Columbia-Willamette.

House, an employee of United Way for almost 13 years, manages the pledge processing activities for all United Way workplace and indi-

vidual donors.

"I'm eager to begin the program to gain new skills and enhance the ones

that I already bring to the table in my work with United Way," said Michelle.

THE LAW OFFICES OF Patrick John Sweeney, P.C.

Patrick John Sweeney
Attorney at Law

1549 SE Ladd
Portland, Oregon

Portland: (503) 491-5156
Hillsboro: (503) 615-0425
Facsimile: (503) 244-2084
Email: Sweeney@PDXLawyer.com

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