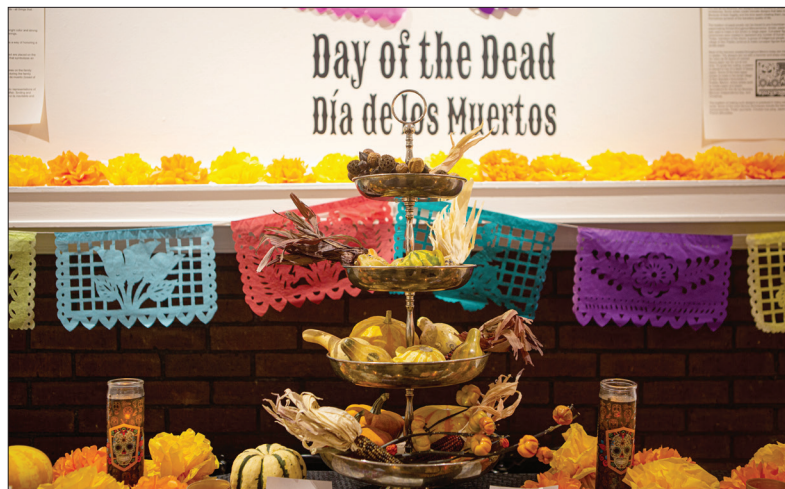


Ofrenda is heart of Día de los Muertos celebration

Go! staff

LA GRANDE — Art Center East's celebration of Día de los Muertos kicked off Oct. 29 with a community gathering featuring Day of the Dead-themed artwork created by Grande Ronde Valley K-12 students, take-and-make kits and an ofrenda.

Ofrendas are an essential part of the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) tradition. Practiced annually, the holiday is a celebration of both life and death. Ofrendas are altars of offering, set up to remember and honor the memory of one's ancestors and loved ones who have passed away. Typically set up in homes, ofrendas are traditionally decorated with photos and mementos, special foods, flowers, candles, incense, "calacas" (decorative



Berenice Chavez/Contributed image

The art exhibit and ofrenda to celebrate Día de los Muertos will be on display through Nov. 10 at Art Center East in La Grande. There is no admission fee and all are welcome.

skull figures) and "calavera" (sugar skull masks).

The tables of offering are works of art in themselves as well as a way to connect to one's family history. The ofrenda at Art Center East likewise is a way to honor those we love — on view to

the community, the shared experience connects us to our friends and neighbors.

Everyone is invited to add to the ofrenda by bringing photographs or mementos that honor their loved ones who have passed away. Stop by Art Center East, 1006 Penn Ave., La

ABOUT DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Día de los Muertos came about as a fusion of the Catholic holidays All Saint's Day (Nov. 1) and All Soul's Day (Nov. 2) and the ancestor-honoring traditions of indigenous Mexico. Día de los Muertos sugar skulls (calaveras) and costumed skeletons (calacas) are commonly seen as an extension of Halloween imagery in the United States, but they are not intended to be spooky. Holiday festivities include Mexican folk art, vibrant colors, music, parades, communal meals and happy reminiscing with family.

tea light candles available for a \$1 donation.

The artwork on display was created by local students. Art Center East staff put together a curriculum packet of art activities that explore aspects of Día de los Muertos aesthetic traditions, and area teachers incorporated the packets into their fall lesson plans.

Special Día de los Muertos Take & Make Kits are still be available for \$8. Purchase these online at artcentereast.org.

The art exhibit and ofrenda will be on display in the Main Gallery through Nov. 10. There is no admission fee and all are welcome. Regular gallery hours are noon-5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturdays

Exhibits can also be viewed online at artcentereast.org thanks to a partnership with John J. Howard Real Estate.

Grande, through Nov. 4 to place items on the altar. (Photographs and mementos may be picked up on Nov. 10). ACE will have

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