

SignalViewpoints



Attendees at a Consejo Hispano event.

# Nonprofit aids Hispanics during pandemic

**SEEN FROM SEASIDE**

R.J. MARX



Formally incorporated in 2006, Consejo Hispano is a community-based nonprofit whose mission is the equitable integration of resident Hispanics into the broader social and economic fabric of the lower Columbia community.

Born and raised in Costa Rica in a bicultural and bilingual home, executive director Jenny Pool Radway immigrated to the United States as a teenager. She attended Ripon College in Wisconsin where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and Spanish and a minor in classical studies. She also holds a master's degree in human services and a master's degree in Latin American economics and politics from the Universidad de Salamanca. Prior to joining Consejo Hispano, Radway lived in Denver, Colorado, and Salamanca, Spain.

The Signal spoke with Pool Radway about efforts to reach the Hispanic community in Clatsop County, the pandemic, immigration and what's next for Consejo Hispano.

**Q: How do you reach out to the community, especially the southern part of Clatsop County?**

A: We cover Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties in Oregon and Pacific County in Washington. That's because we don't have a lot of culturally specific and culturally responsive organizations, other than us in those areas. And so people know us and call us for any number of things. And just know that if we don't have the answer, we'll help them get in touch with the resources or the answers that they need.

We have our Facebook page, of course, and we have several WhatsApp groups, but primarily, it's still word of mouth, of people saying I need help. I'm a Spanish speaker. It doesn't matter if they're in south Clatsop County or in Nehalem or where we're at. They'll call our office and get assistance from us.

**Q: What are the major issues in the county?**

A: Recently, with the high heat, we received calls around worker rights and how



Jenny Pool Radway is the executive director of Consejo Hispano.

people can advocate for themselves at work when it's super hot. Things that are always ongoing are helping children register for school or translation services.

The last two weeks, for example, we've been in Cannon Beach, doing surveys so that the county has information on how to help the Latinx community with the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding that they're receiving. So we've been doing surveys with community members when they're at the soccer field.

We also had a COVID vaccination clinic last month on June 30 at the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce, and we're going to have the follow-up next week.

**Q: What kind of turnout did you get for that?**

A: We had about 80 adults come. They didn't all get vaccinated, but they showed up to learn about them. We thought that was a pretty good turnout for a Wednesday evening.

**Q: So in a way you represent an opportunity to reach out to a neglected or underserved audience?**

A: Absolutely. We are a trusted resource for the community members.

**Q: During the COVID-19 pandemic last year, I know that there was a lot of concern about the worker conditions in Astoria and elsewhere. Did you share those concerns?**

A: We did and we still do. There are still a lot of issues, not just at the canneries, but for farm workers in general. And for people who work in the tourism industry and the restaurant industry as well.

**Q: What are the kinds of worker issues you might see, specifically in the tourism**

**and restaurant industry?**

A: Not enough protection, in terms of getting hand sanitizer, face masks, enough PPE (personal protective equipment) supplies that they need. In different parts of the county, we have people, someone will call their employer and say, "I'm asymptomatic, but I've tested positive for COVID" and the employer will still let them come to work.

And while our community members recognize that that is not what should be happening, they also don't have a choice because they need to feed their families and keep a roof over their head. They don't want to lose their employment.

**Q: Is there still an issue with immigration status and fears of deportation?**

A: Absolutely. A lot of community members didn't want to get vaccinated at first because of concerns of what questions were asked when you got your vaccine.

**Q: So they were reluctant to do so?**

A: Absolutely. Until we explained that that was not something that would get them into any trouble. That still plays a big role in our community.

**Q: Did the same thing happen last year with the census? Did you find that people overcame their concerns about possibly the information being used in a way to harm themselves or their families?**

A: I don't think we overcame the issue then. Mostly because we were still under a Trump presidency and people didn't know what the election results would be. A lot of people did not participate, and we're definitely undercounted.

**Q: So our census numbers are going to be underreported?**

A: Absolutely. A lot of people are not technologically savvy, because they don't have a lot of experience or technology at home, like a laptop to use. They don't want to use their phone, because they're afraid that it might be tracked, even though it's not.

It's hard to reassure people when there's a doubt. And we were in the middle of a pandemic, so we couldn't really bring laptops to them to complete it.

**Q: Did you find Latinx people, especially under the Trump administration, returning to their home countries?**

A: No. People hold out hope. They think if I go back, and then somebody else gets elected who sees things more favorably, it will be much harder for me to come back. It's a hard journey.

**Q: Do you see more people coming into the U.S. now that Biden is president?**

A: No.

**Q: So the the fear of a quote unquote "immigrant tide" is not happening here?**

A: I don't think the Oregon numbers have changed. I couldn't speak to other places in the country.

**Q: A federal judge ruled that Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program that allows certain immigrants to temporarily avoid deportation and receive renewable work permits, is illegal and ordered the Biden administration to stop giving permits. Is that of concern?**

A: Absolutely. There's about 60,000 people who are, not locally, but 60,000 people who are stuck in, you know, limbo because their applications were being processed and we don't know if they're going to continue to be processed or what's happening there. We did see an increase locally once there was an administrative change in the White House that we had a lot more people applying for DACA.

**Q: Do you have any initiatives going on right now that you'd like to talk about?**

A: We have been working with the Oregon Worker Relief Fund for over a year now. It's an organization that was created because of the pandemic. And we've been able to bring in over \$1 million in the Clatsop County (area) in assistance. The numbers are pretty good. And we're really proud of that work.

**Q: Do you have any any wish list of things you'd like to see in the county or locally for the population?**

A: I think I'd like there to be more access, more language access, and certainly more economic access. That's very broad, but it's because there's so much that falls under that.

**Q: Do you think Clatsop County has got a ways to go in terms of improving their outreach?**

A: Yes, but I think that they're willing to do it. And that's a huge piece of the puzzle.

**Q: Do you feel optimistic about where you're headed? Or do you feel that you've got severe challenges? What's your outlook?**

A: I'm very optimistic. I think we have a great staff. We're a growing team. And we're right in the middle of our strategic planning process right now. But I think that, yeah, we have great things happening in the next few years.

**BRIEFS**

**New KMUN frequency in Cannon Beach**

The new KMUN translator in Cannon Beach is at the north end of town, well above the inundation zone atop a 50-foot tower that is much closer to the tops of the surrounding trees. Find KMUN at 89.3 FM in the

Cannon Beach area. The radio waves transmit at 250 watts instead of the 10 watts provided by the old transmitter which was located in a barn, surrounded by trees, east of the highway, in midtown.

Beyond KMUN's more powerful broadcast antenna, the tower will also accommodate radio antennas for

local ham, general mobile radio service and Cannon Beach emergency radios.

**Residents named to Pacific University dean's list**

Local students were named to the dean's list at Pacific University in For-

est Grove, Oregon.

Katie Weber of Cannon Beach was named to the dean's list for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 terms. Andrea Castro-Martinez was named to the dean's list for the spring 2021 term.

Founded in 1849, Pacific University is a comprehensive university

offering undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in the liberal arts and sciences, business, education, health professions and optometry.

**Students named to Linfield dean's list**

Caitlin Hillman of Gear-

hart and Luke Nelson of Seaside were named to the spring 2021 dean's list at Linfield University.

The dean's list identifies students who have earned a term GPA at least equivalent to a cum laude (at least 3.65 GPA) for a given semester. It is computed following the posting of grades at the end of each semester.

**PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

**TUESDAY, AUG. 3**

Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225

Avenue A.

Seaside Library Board of Directors, 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway St.

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

**WEDNESDAY, AUG. 4**

Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

**THURSDAY, AUG. 5**

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

**MONDAY, AUG. 9**

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., cityofseaside.us.

**THURSDAY, AUG. 12**

Seaside Civic and Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., 415

First Ave.

Gearhart Planning Commission, 6 p.m., cityofgearhart.us.

**WEDNESDAY, AUG. 13**

Gearhart City Council 6 p.m., public hearings, cityofgearhart.us.

**TUESDAY, AUG. 17**

Gearhart Small Business Committee, 6 p.m., cityofgearhart.us.

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., work session, 989 Broadway.



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