

EMCC celebrating women during Hispanic Heritage Month

EMCC highlights contributions during Hispanic celebration

by **David Madrid** - Sept. 23, 2009 09:45 AM
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Estrella Mountain Community College kicked off Hispanic [Heritage](#) Month last week with a theme of celebrating women of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The monthlong celebration runs through Oct. 16.

The theme highlights the contributions of Hispanic women to society, said Adolfo G3mez, [director](#) of corporate and foundation relations for the Avondale campus.

The theme was inspired by new U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic on the court and someone with a pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps success story, G3mez said. Sotomayor was born to a Puerto Rican family and grew up in a public housing project in the south Bronx.

"She shows that the dream is possible," G3mez said. "Students know it (success) can happen. Her story is similar to many of our stories. The American dream is possible, even in these times."

G3mez, the mayor of Tolleson, said it is important that students know that education is the key to success.

"The thrust (of Hispanic Heritage Month) is to acknowledge Hispanics in general and the contributions we've made to society," he said.

"From the military, from education to politics, local, statewide and national, we need to acknowledge what we've contributed. We need to be proud of that. That's what this is all about."

Of the college's students, about 35 percent are Hispanic, G3mez said.

The college kicked the month off with a proclamation from Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, who was not present because of a previous engagement in Washington, D.C. City Councilman Jason Earp read the proclamation.

Then Mariachi Los Reyes de Arizona performed. There was a dance workshop hosted by [Ballet](#) Folklor3ico Esperanza featuring Jessica Adame.

Adame, 20, is the MEChA historian at Estrella Mountain and is in her third year of college. MEChA is the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztl3n, a student organization that promotes higher education, Hispanic culture and history.

Reflecting on the month's theme, she said it makes her think of the power of women.

"In my family, my mom is the one who runs the house; it's either her way or the highway," Adame said.

She is proud to see Sotomayor on the Supreme Court.

"That makes me want to achieve more goals in my life," she said.

Deanna Hernandez, 17, started college last month. She said her family is from Mexico. Her mother recently became a U.S. citizen, which makes the family proud.

"It (citizenship) was important to my mother," she said. "It makes [my grandparents](#) proud that they came here for that dream, and their daughter fulfilled it."

Hernandez, who is pursuing a degree in administration of justice, said she plans to join MEChA. She wants to become more involved in the community and help make it a better place.

"This gets me in touch with [my roots](#)," Hernandez said of the monthlong celebration. "It makes me proud of who I am."

Students held a food sale at the kickoff festivities with proceeds benefiting student scholarships.

Christina Izaguirre, 35, a co-chair, said the food was donated and every cent of the proceeds from the fundraiser would go to scholarships.

EMCC is at Thomas and Dysart Roads in Avondale.