



Students Celebrate, Study Cinco de Mayo

Celebration and study came together for Denver students as they worked through reading, writing, math, history, geography, and art activities in the Alma instructional unit *Cinco de Mayo: A Historical Celebration*. Written by DPS teacher Astrid Parr, the unit is designed for implementation in early elementary classrooms.

Cinco de Mayo commemorates the May 5, 1862 victory of Mexican forces over the French army in the Battle of Puebla. During the battle, 2,000 Mexican peasants under the command of Benito Juarez defeated 6,000 French troops. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo means celebrating not only victory in battle, but Hispanic culture in general. Singing, dancing, fairs, food, costumes, and entertainment play important roles in the event.

The Alma unit helps students learn about the historical, cultural, and celebratory aspects of the holiday. Instruction includes reading about the Battle of Puebla; learning about the United States and Mexican flags; playing and performing Mexican music; and feasting on tortillas. Throughout the unit, the culture shaping the history, food, and customs is explored.

Connie Berghorn's morning ECE class at Hallett Elementary studied the holiday in several ways. They looked at books about such topics as the history of Cinco de Mayo, the story behind the sombrero, and the making of piñatas. On the fifth of May, the study concluded with a celebration—including Mexican music, dressing up for the occasion, and feasting on tortillas cooked in the classroom by three volunteer moms.

First-grade students making the transition from being taught in Spanish to instruction in English learned new words and the concept of comparing and contrasting in Rosalie Gomez's ELA-S class at Doull Elementary. Their study of the differences and similarities between the United States and Mexican flags began in Spanish on one day and continued in English the following day.

Photos of students from Hallett and Doull can be found on the following page.



This newsletter is dedicated to

Rodolfo 'Corky' Gonzales

1928–2005

You lit the flame that burns in our hearts and minds.

Thank you for being the voice, for the call to action.

Your legacy is a pillar we will lean on when we stand alone.

Adios, Carnal.

Leslie Botello (top) and Demarius Pittman (left) dressed the part for the Cinco de Mayo lessons and celebration in Connie Berghorn's morning ECE class at Hallett Elementary.



Doull first graders Amayrani Puentes-Rizo and Luis David Nazario-Zamora display the United States and Mexican flags as teacher Rosalie Gomez leads students in a discussion to compare and contrast the flags.



Connie Berghorn's morning ECE students at Hallett Elementary show off art projects they created during their study of Cinco de Mayo. Adults, standing: Graciela Chavez (mother), Luz Maria Torres (mother), Armidia Cummmings (teacher), Connie Berghorn (teacher), Olga Zapate (mother). Students, standing: Jesus Navarro, Numbie Barr-Johnson, Demarius Pittman, Hawa Diakite, Roberto Garay, Aushanae Thomas, Tatyana Davis, Jenifer Gonzalez, Iauniss Smith. Kneeling: Leslie Botello, Mone Arps, Rafael Leon.

Tour of Denver Chicano Murals Offered

In honor of the Mexican and Denver Chicano Muralist Movement, the Museo de las Américas is offering an intimate tour of prominent North and West Denver murals that will end with a reception with the artists. The May 21 event will begin at the Museo with a tour of the exhibit Siqueiros: Spirit of a Revolutionary. Afterward, participants will visit murals by Chicano artists. The tour begins at 1 p.m., with the reception following at 4 p.m. Tickets are available for \$50 and may be ordered by calling 303.571.4401.

What Is the Alma Project?

The Alma Project provides multicultural curriculum to teachers in Denver Public Schools with well-developed, standards-based and literacy-based lessons for ECE through 12th grade. The curriculum covers a wide variety of topics that reflect the various ethnicities represented in DPS. When teachers check out these curriculum units, they receive a unit/teacher's guide, sets of books for each student, and/or supportive books/materials for the teacher, and other resources that may include videos, cassettes, CDs, posters, maps, and musical instruments. DPS teachers and staff can check out these units of study with their corresponding resources from the Alma Project multicultural library absolutely free of charge.

A catalog of the titles can be viewed on the Alma Project Web site at <http://almaproject.dpsk12.org>. The unit/teacher's guides can be downloaded and printed from the Web site at no charge. This multicultural curriculum has been used by teachers throughout the United States.

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The Alma Project

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