

October, 2013
Volume.1006



- Colombia



- Peru



- Ecuador



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Around the World through ESL

CELEBRATES HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



- El Salvador



- Mexico

ESL Staff:
Laurie Weinberg
(Coordinator) &
Jinky Davis (Advisor)

Did you know that....

1. people of Hispanic origin are now our nation's largest ethnic or race minority?
2. as of 2010, only Mexico (112 million) has a larger Hispanic population than the United States (50.5 million)?
3. 63% of Hispanic-origin people in the United States were of Mexican background in 2010? Another 9.2 percent were of Puerto Rican background, 3.5 percent Cuban, 3.3 percent Salvadoran and 2.8 percent Dominican. The remainder was of some other Central American, South American or other Hispanic or Latino origin.
4. 1.1 million Hispanics or Latinos 18 and older are veterans of the U.S. armed forces?
5. Virginia is one of 16 states with at least a half-million Hispanic residents?
6. Richmond's Latino population has grown over the last two decades and now accounts for nearly 6 percent of the city's population at about 13,000 people?
7. Our very own college president Dr. Rhodes is fluent in Spanish ?

The Faces of Our Reynolds Hispanic Family

Our ESL program at Reynolds has been home to numerous Spanish-speaking countries, including:

Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Read below what some of our students have to say about Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru.



Building Understanding

When students were asked what they would like more North Americans to understand about their countries and cultures, some common themes emerged. Three graduates of our ESL program, two from Colombia and one from Peru, shared the following.

Maria Pico (Colombia) said that many North Americans don't understand that all Spanish speaking people are not Mexican. "We come from many different countries: Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Honduras, Ecuador, Argentina, Colombia, etc." Furthermore, even people from the same countries have different accents, just like in the U.S. She would also like more North Americans to understand that even though Hispanics are willing to do many intensive and low-skilled jobs, it doesn't mean that they are not educated. They have different reasons to take these jobs; many times it is just so that they can support their families.

Maria Juliana Villa (Colombia) reported that she is surprised that so many North Americans let the media and Hollywood shape their understanding of Colombians. When strangers ask her questions such as, "Are you Pablo Escobar's daughter?" or "Do you smoke weed?" it makes her think that people just go with what they see on TV. She would like more people to appreciate Colombia's amazing culture and products; for example, Colombia has the most exquisite coffee and the most beautiful flowers in the world. She is sure that no matter where people are from, as soon as they really get to know a Colombian or visit the country, they will fall in love with the culture and broaden their awareness of the country and people she loves.

Yane Morton (Peru) has lived in the US for more than 6 years. Although she is now an American citizen, she has not fully adapted to the North American lifestyle. She would like more Americans to understand that in her culture, an elderly person or a pregnant woman or a person carrying a baby is given priority. For example, if one of them is waiting in line, they should be attended to first. In fact, if others don't let these people go first, it is considered impolite and even a crime and the offender can end up in jail. She wishes more North Americans shared these rules of courtesy.



The Immigrant Experience



Gioconda Guncay, from Ecuador, immigrated to the US 8 years ago after having been separated from her parents for more than 12 years. Seeking a better life for their family, her father, who had studied medicine in Ecuador, came first. It took him years to establish himself here economically, but eventually he became a chef. (Somewhat ironically, Ecuador has become the #1 overseas retirement destination for North Americans due to the low cost of living there!) During their separation, Gioconda lived with her grandparents in Ecuador. By the time Gioconda came to the US 8 years ago, she was married. She had kept in daily phone contact with her mother over the years, but it still took time to get reacquainted with her parents once they were reunited. She also has a sister who was born here whom she met only once when her sister made a visit to Ecuador at age 6. Gioconda spent her first years in the US in New York, which is known as the Ecuadoran capital of North America. Adjusting to life in Richmond has been challenging since there are not many Hispanic families in her neighborhood. Her 6-year old son does not like to speak Spanish here since he thinks it's important to speak English, but Gioconda is happy that he is able and willing to speak Spanish when they visit family in Ecuador.

Gioconda grew up in Cuenca, a mountainous region of Ecuador. The most common food specialty in that region is guinea pig. Roasting whole pigs is also common. In Ecuador, holidays are big festivals, lasting 3-4 days. No public services are available during holidays. Gioconda recommended others to visit her country. The people are nice and very welcoming and the pace of life is slower. She recommends experiencing the food and the cities, and if possible, visiting the Galapagos Islands.

Gioconda, who works as a nursing assistant, hopes to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing.

International Student Perspectives



Mauricio Amaya came to the US to study on an international student (F1) visa. Prior to coming to the US, Mauricio graduated from a Culinary Arts program in El Salvador and worked as a chef in an Italian/Sicilian restaurant. He does not like the reputation El Salvador has of being a dangerous country because there are so many good things there as well. Did you know that many Americans live there, most people can speak English and the US dollar is the common currency? Favorite pastimes for young El

Salvadorans include clubbing and playing soccer. On holidays, people flock to the beautiful beaches which have great waves for surfing. The cuisine of El Salvador is similar to that found in Honduras. "Pupusas" are a staple; made of corn flour, they are fried like a pancake and filled with cheese, beans, or pork. Tamales are also popular. Mauricio was delighted to find an El Salvadoran food shop in his neighborhood here. Check out the El Amanecer Patina on Staples Mill Road if you are seeking authentic El Salvadoran foods.

Mauricio attended a British school in El Salvador. He was never a big reader but has truly enjoyed the novel study component of his advanced ESL reading class here at Reynolds. And his writing class has made him realize that writing is actually a lot harder than he had thought! Mauricio looks forward to pursuing a degree in Hospitality Management or Business.



Jorge Abraham Lopez (who goes by "Abraham") moved to Virginia from Mexico 5 years ago when his father got a job working for Smithfield Foods. Abraham attended high school in Prince George County and credits his high school English teacher for helping him overcome his language barrier. Even though English was a big challenge for him when he first arrived, he found that people in his high school were very friendly and open to meeting others and his transition was relatively smooth. He decided on Reynolds because he was looking for the most affordable option as an international student on a student visa. He is pursuing a science degree and his favorite class here at Reynolds is Biology. He hopes to major in environmental science at VCU when he completes his studies here. He finds that there are many misunderstandings about what it takes to make changes to our environment but he is firm in his belief that small changes can do a lot

and he's committed to making the world a better place.

Abraham laughs now about some of the stereotypes that Americans have of Mexicans and Spanish speakers – everyone who speaks Spanish is Mexican, all Mexicans eat tacos, all Mexicans are short and dark-skinned. One stereotype that does bother him is that so many people think all Mexicans are illegal immigrants. He recognizes that immigration is a complicated issue but hopes that Americans can take more of a doors and windows approach to the problems rather than building fences and barriers.

Even though Mexico has become a more dangerous place in recent years, tourists should feel safe to travel there if they do their research in advance about where to go and where not to go and to find out what is acceptable. It also helps to have a translator. The most popular Mexican holiday is Mexican Independence Day on September 15. People gather together for concerts, cultural activities and fireworks and gather together in the downtown area to shout, "Viva Mexico!" This is a great time for others to visit his country since people are particularly friendly and outgoing at this time.

Abraham would like people to know that Mexicans are a deeply religious people who are family and community oriented and who have a deep respect for their mothers and elders. There is a saying in Mexico that if you don't love your mother, you don't love your country. He describes Mexicans as happy people, who want to see the bright side of life. Abraham truly embodies this description!

National Hispanic Heritage Month started in 1968 as **Hispanic Heritage Week** under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. September 15 marks the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile and Belize also celebrate their independence days during this period. Through a variety of cultural celebrations, we recognize the contributions made and the important presence of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the United States.

While the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, *Hispanic* is a narrower term which mostly refers to persons of Spanish-speaking origin or ancestry, while *Latino* is more frequently used to refer more generally to anyone of Latin American origin or ancestry, including Brazilians (who speak Portuguese). For purposes of the U.S. Census, Hispanic Americans today are identified according to the parts of the world that they or their ancestors came from, including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain, or the nations of Central or South America. On the 2010 Census form, people of Spanish, Hispanic and/or Latino origin could identify themselves as Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin."

Hispanics tend to have a strong commitment to family, faith, hard work, and service, and they have enhanced and shaped our national character with centuries-old traditions that reflect the multiethnic and multicultural customs of their community.

Reynolds Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month!

The Fall theme of the Multicultural Enrichment Council of Reynolds Community College is Immigration. On Friday, October 25, from 6:00-8:30 in the Gallery, *Around the World through Movies* will feature *Sin Nombre*, the perilous story of a Honduran woman's journey to the United States. The discussion will be led by Spanish professor, Carlos Ossandon. On Tuesday, October 29, from 5:30-7:00 in the Gallery, *Around the World through Books* will discuss Let it Rain Coffee, an immigrant story exploring the life of a family from the Dominican Republic. The discussion will be led by Princeton Sociology graduate student, Maria Abascal, who will also share her Cuban-American immigrant story. You are encouraged to attend these events to learn more about our US Hispanic heritage!

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey: Table B21001I www.census.gov/acs/www/

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International Data Base
www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbsum.html

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U.S. Census Bureau