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Rio Hondo College Invites Community to Decorate Día de Los Muertos Altar Created by LA Artist Ofelia Esparza

WHITTIER – Rio Hondo College is inviting members of the campus community to add their personal touches to a Día de Los Muertos altar created by Los Angeles artist and storyteller Ofelia Esparza, one in a series of fall events highlighting Latino culture.

Esparza, a master altar builder, gave a talk to more than 175 campus and community members about the cultural significance of the Latin American celebration of the dead.

She then led a workshop on constructing altars, assembling a vibrant display filled with gold and purple paper flowers in the lobby of Rio Hondo College's Wray Theater.

"This is a magnificent work of art that will grace our campus through the season, emphasizing Rio Hondo College's strength through diversity," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. "I encourage everyone to take in the power of the display and to contribute something significant to them."

Día de los Muertos, celebrated on Nov. 2, represents a combination of Aztec cultural traditions and Catholicism.

Rio Hondo College's altar features paper flowers constructed by workshop participants, as well as personal images of family members.

"Cultural programs, including our Día de Los Muertos altar, help Rio Hondo College students connect what they learn in the classroom to the world around them," Board of Trustees President Norma Edith Garcia said. "This fall, we have an incredible program of cultural programs to enrich our students' education and augment our classroom instruction."

Students, staff, faculty and administrators can add their own artifacts, mementos, photographs, objects, flowers, saints and candles.

MORE

Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

PHOTOS

RHC_ALTAR_1: Los Angeles artist Ofelia Esparza assembles an altar for Día de Los Muertos during a workshop at Rio Hondo College on Oct. 12. Community members are invited to add their own personal mementos to the altar to celebrate loved ones who have died.

RHC_ALTAR_2: Rio Hondo College students and staff create paper flowers for the College's Día de Los Muertos altar, created by LA artist Ofelia Esparza, on Oct. 12. Community members are invited to add their own personal mementos to the altar to celebrate loved ones who have died.

RHC_ALTAR_3: A Día de Los Muertos altar stands ready as a symbol celebrating loved ones who have died. Created on Oct. 12 by LA artist and storyteller Ofelia Esparza, the display will serve as a community altar for Rio Hondo College students, staff, faculty and administrators, who are invited to add their own items. *Photo by Manuel David Lara.*

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