



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 20, 2017

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Dolores Huerta International Academy Celebrates Día de Los Muertos

FONTANA, CA – Dolores Huerta International Academy second-grader Christian Velasco never met his great-uncle Frank “Paco” Avedaño, but said he feels like he knows him after learning about his life and constructing a Día de Los Muertos altar in his honor.

“I liked hearing all the funny stories that my dad had about him,” Velasco said during the magnet school’s Día de Los Muertos celebration on Nov. 9. “I especially liked hearing about when my dad and his uncle were riding bikes down a steep hill. My uncle crashed and the first thing he asked when he woke up was ‘where are my sandals?’”

Día de Los Muertos, Day of the Dead, is an annual celebration of remembrance for deceased family members, friends and cultural icons. In the spirit of the holiday, Dolores Huerta International Academy showcased more than 400 student-made altars that featured photos, keepsakes and favorite foods of their family members.

“Our Día de Los Muertos event is important because it not only teaches students about how significant culture is, but also the importance of empathy towards other cultures,” Principal Maribel Lopez-Tyus said. “Here at Dolores Huerta, we teach our students to be bilingual and events like this teach them to be bicultural because we want them to be global citizens when they become adults.”

Students also gave presentations on their altars and relatives based on research obtained from their parents.

“Dia de Los Muertos isn’t about being sad, it’s about joy since you’re celebrating the life of your ancestors and remembering all the great things they did,” said third-grader David Llamas, who created an altar for his grandfather, Mazario.

Parents and students also enjoyed pan dulce, got their faces painted and crafted calavera (skull) and papel picado (paper cut into elaborate designs) artwork.

“We are thrilled to see Fontana Unified students learning about multiculturalism while also honoring their heritage and their loved ones,” FUSD Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

112017_FUSD_DIA1: Dolores Huerta International Academy kindergartener Monica Jauregai, wearing skull makeup, attends her school's Nov. 9 Día de Los Muertos celebration. The event highlighted the Mexican holiday with arts and crafts activities and pan dulce.

112017_FUSD_DIA2: Dolores Huerta International Academy students hold decorated calavera (skull) masks during their school's Día de Los Muertos event on Nov. 9. Día de Los Muertos, Day of the Dead, is a Mexican holiday to celebrate the lives of deceased family members, friends and cultural icons.

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