



UPLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Upland Unified Celebrates Community with Annual Hispanic Heritage Month Festival

UPLAND – Upland Unified School District celebrated the history, culture, art, and cuisine of its Latino community during its fifth annual Hispanic Heritage Month Festival on Oct. 1, bringing students, families, and staff together for an afternoon featuring mariachi music, folklórico dancers, tacos, pupuserias, and dancing in the main quad at Upland High School.

The event, which also served as a resource fair for the local community, was attended by more than 300 local residents, many wearing traditional clothing or colors representing their countries of origin. At tables decorated with Mexican tapestries, guests enjoyed chilitos and sipped on horchata while watching local artists and Upland Unified students bring their culture to life with inspiring performances.

“This is our fifth year hosting the festival, and it gets better every year,” Upland High Principal Dr. Martin Gomez said. “We have students and families from across the District who come to celebrate with music, dance, and good food.”

Several local Upland groups provided entertainment for the festival, while Upland High students helped welcome guests and lead activities. Members of Upland High’s Latino Student Union sold fruit cups, while the school’s Unity Club invited younger students to color paper sugar skull masks or receive temporary tattoos.

“The Unity Club really opens your mind to new perspectives,” Upland High senior and Unity Club member Christopher Coria said. “When you learn people’s stories, it changes your perspective. Seeing how our friends and neighbors celebrate their culture brings us more understanding and helps us come together as a people.”

The student performances included a spirited group of Baldy View Dual Language Immersion Academy’s second-grade dual language students, who performed the popular children’s song “Una Vez Me Encontré” by Dúo Tiempo de Sol, while their teachers, Maria Jacob and Yubane Sanchez, looked on with pride.

“I was born and raised in Mexico and came to the United States when I was 16 years old,” Jacob said. “Coming to America is a dream come true for me. This is my passion. I am so proud to be part of this celebration and share it with my students, my colleagues, and my community.”

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Upland Unified students also collaborated on a Hispanic Heritage Month art show held in Upland High's multipurpose room, which featured colorfully decorated 3-D hearts made by Upland High School art students, with each heart representing a feeling or emotion held by the artist. Upland High art students also contributed paintings, color tiles, and Day of the Dead-inspired charcoal drawings. Elementary students from throughout the District also contributed culturally-inspired artwork.

Local groups included young performers from the Upland Academy of the Arts wearing ruffled blouses and performing traditional ballet folklórico dances; as well as performers from the Upland-based Herencia Mexicana de Maria Alvarez dance group wearing trajes tipicos dresses, and performing folklórico. Mariachi Bohemio performed several live songs, and DJ Ernie of Active Entertainment provided additional music.

"The Hispanic Heritage Month Festival is one of the many events we have during the year to build community throughout the District. It's a wonderful event that brings so many people together," Upland Unified Director of Equity, Access, and Accountability Dr. Antonio Gonzalez said. "We want to be able to embrace all the cultures we see at Upland Unified and the surrounding community."

Upland Unified will also have Districtwide celebrations to observe Black History Month in February 2027 and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May 2027.

"We look forward to the Hispanic Heritage Month Festival every year because it brings the community together to share a culture, reflect on our shared histories, and, most importantly, show our children that these unique cultures and traditions are part of their own rich heritage," Superintendent Lynn Carmen Day said. "The more we understand each other, the more we grow, and the more we learn."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

UUSD_HERITAGE1: Upland Unified's fifth annual Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration featured a performance from the Upland-based Herencia Mexicana de Maria Alvarez dance group.

UUSD_HERITAGE2: Upland Academy of the Arts students prepare to take the stage at the fifth annual Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration at Upland High School on Oct. 1.

UUSD_HERITAGE3: Students from Upland High School displayed their artwork at the Upland Unified Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, including Day of the Dead-inspired charcoal drawings.

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