

CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE, OUR TIME

CMHA's first annual Spanish American festival is an enormous success

CMHA held its first annual Spanish American Heritage Festival on Thursday, October 16, 2008 at Riverside Park Community Center. The goal of the event was to build awareness in the area by bringing families together to learn about their cultures and way of life.

More than 200 people attended the festivities that began at 4 p.m. and went on into the night. With 12 vendors from all over the Cleveland area and numerous beneficial resources in Spanish and English, the event was a massive success for the residents in the community. There were historical displays and information on the rich heritage of Spanish Americans with a parade of flags lead by the children. Latin dancers Jose Ramirez and Company, singers, and musicians entertained the crowd and a wonderful festival of culinary cuisine to sample followed.

“This event was a nice idea so that people can get to know more about the Spanish culture. I’m impressed with the display of countries, traditions and customs plus the dancers, music, and food were all outstanding,” said Mayra Torres, CMHA resident.

Speakers included Michael Burns, Self-Sufficiency Coordinator, Aurea Garcia, Director, Carolyn Gaiter, Director of Asset Management, Andres Gonzalez, Chief of Police, George Phillips, Chief Executive Officer and Safety Director, and a special heartfelt speech from the honorable Judge Jazmin Torres-Lugo.

Judge Torres-Lugo shared her inspiring story with the people, where she specifically addressed the youth that if they strive to do their best, they will achieve greatness in life.

“If we unite, the city, state, nation can be a wonderful place to live. God bless you all,” concluded Judge Torres-Lugo.

“How can we bring the Spanish Community together? And what can we do together to celebrate Spanish American Heritage month?” These questions along with a lot of heart and soul from Michael Burns, Self-Sufficiency Coordinator at CMHA, created and molded this event into something bigger and better than anyone expected. “We hope to do this again next year and the year after that to continue the momentum and excitement that was generated from the community.”