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A New Era of Latino Leadership in Michigan

Una Nueva Era de Liderazgo Latino en Michigan



By Dr. José A. Flores

Michigan has never witnessed the wave of ethnic and racial transformation in the public service arena that we see in 2026. Yes, there is also more to come as politics take front and center on our agenda. A powerful transformation is reshaping civic life. Hispanic/Latino under-representation in public office is no longer the norm. We are now stepping decisively into leadership roles across Michigan's government, education, and public service sectors. This shift is not accidental. It is the result of years of political advocacy, organizing efforts, mass education, and a growing recognition that representation is achievable through a spirit of "Si Se Puede!".

In cities like Lansing, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Fennville, Saginaw, and Wyoming, Latino leaders are winning elections, leading school districts, and influencing decisions that once excluded their voices. Mayors, Commissioners, Council Members, Justices, School Superintendents, and countless public servants of Black, Brown and Indigenous backgrounds are making inroads through the electoral process. The momentum is unmistakable: Michigan is experiencing the most significant rise in Latino civic participation in modern history.

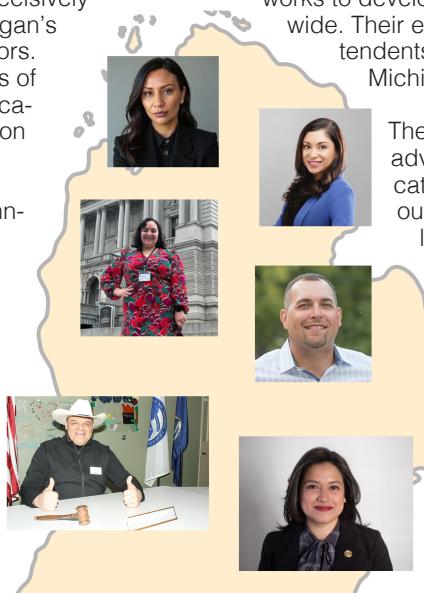
Detroit City Council member Gabriela Santiago-Romero embodies this new era. As the first Latina elected to represent District 6, she brings the lived experience of Southwest Detroit's immigrant community into city hall. Her work on environmental justice and equitable development reflects the priorities of a district shaped by industry, resilience, and cultural pride.

Carlos Lopez is the current Mayor of Fennville, Michigan. He was elected to the position in November 2023, and his term runs until November 2027. Lopez is the first Hispanic mayor of the City of Fennville and has lived in the area for over 30 years. He has focused on Economic Development, Community Support, Civic Engagement and Inclusion, Public Safety, and Support for Farmworkers and has led the City of Fennville with great devotion to purpose!

Lansing, MI recently witnessed a dramatic change in the composition of its City Council which now has half of its council represented by Hispanic/Latino community members who bring new perspectives representing the bilingual and bicultural American and immigrant families with specific concerns and ideas to improve living conditions in their city. Our congratulations extended to Lansing Council Members: Clara Martinez, Trini Lopez-Pehlivanoglu, Deyanira Nevarez Martinez, Ph.D. and Jeremy Garza for their service to a community service mindset!

The leadership movement extends beyond government. In education, where Latino students make up a growing share of enrollment, Latino superintendents are emerging as transformative leaders. Dr. Abel López of Godfrey-Lee Public Schools leads one of the most Latino-serving districts in the state. His commitment to bilingual education, culturally responsive teaching, and family engagement demonstrates what is possible when leadership reflects the community it serves.

Similarly, Dr. Francisco López of Eastpointe Community Schools has championed equity and student-centered reforms in a district undergoing rapid demographic change. His leadership highlights the im-



portance of Latino administrators in shaping educational systems that understand and uplift diverse learners.

These leaders are not isolated examples. They are part of a broader pipeline strengthened by organizations like the Michigan Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (MI-ALAS), which works to develop and support Latino educational leaders statewide. Their efforts ensure that the next generation of superintendents, principals, and policymakers will better reflect Michigan's multicultural reality.

The progress we see today is the result of decades of advocacy—from community organizers, bilingual educators, neighborhood associations, and Latino media outlets that have insisted on visibility and voice. Publications like The Community Voice/La Voz Magazine have played a critical role in documenting this journey, informing voters, and celebrating the achievements of Latino leaders across the state. Responsible leadership requires activist voices!

Yet this moment is not simply about representation. It is about power! Leadership means the power to shape budgets, influence policy, and determine the future of our schools, neighborhoods, and cities. Latino leaders are stepping into that power with integrity, vision, and a deep commitment to community. An educated Black, Brown, Indigenous Person of Color helps our communities gain access to the power structure in society and enables us to uplift communities. We must not accept systems that prepare our children to continue our traditional societal roles of second-class servants occupying the lower-level positions in our economy when we possess the potential to be industry bosses, doctors, lawyers, business owners, government officials and civic leaders! We must hold our institutions accountable to properly educate and prepare our children for leadership! This is the example being made by our highlighted leaders in this issue of The Community Voice/La Voz Magazine and future highlights.

Michigan's Latino community is no longer asking for a seat at the table. It is taking its rightful place at the center of civic life. And this is only the beginning!

Michigan nunca ha presenciado la ola de transformación étnica y racial en el ámbito del servicio público que veremos en 2026. Sí, hay más por venir a medida que la política ocupa un lugar central en nuestra agenda. Una poderosa transformación está transformando la vida cívica. La subrepresentación hispana/latina en cargos públicos ya no es la norma. Ahora estamos asumiendo con decisión roles de liderazgo en los sectores gubernamental, educativo y de servicios públicos de Michigan. Este cambio no es accidental. Es el resultado de años de incidencia política, esfuerzos de organización, educación masiva y un creciente reconocimiento de que la representación se puede lograr mediante el espíritu de "Sí se puede!".

En ciudades como Lansing, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Fennville, Saginaw y Wyoming, los líderes latinos están ganando elecciones, liderando distritos escolares e influyendo en decisiones que antes excluían sus voces. Alcaldes, comisionados, concejales, jueces, superintendentes escolares e innumerables servidores públicos de ascendencia negra, latina e indígena están logrando avances a través del proceso electoral. El impulso es innegable: Michigan está experimentando el aumento más significativo en la participación cívica latina en la historia moderna.

....Versión en español continúa en la pag. 12

Fighting loneliness is an act of love

Combatir la soledad es un acto de amor



By Dadsy J. Torres
Rivera Ph. D

In February, the month of love, we think of flowers, cards, special dinners, and romantic actions. But love is much bigger than that. Love is also communal, everyday, and simple. It is a timely call, a friendly greeting on the street, an unexpected visit, or an invitation to a coffee. Therefore, today more than ever, we need to remember that combating loneliness is one of the most important acts of love we can give.

During the winter, when temperatures keep us indoors longer, loneliness can be felt more strongly. Many people live far from family, work from home, or have mobility impairments. And, although we do not always say it, there are days when silence weighs heavily. Loneliness does not always look like we imagine. It is not only being unaccompanied; sometimes it is being surrounded by people and still feeling invisible. It is looking out the window at the landscape and wondering if anyone is thinking about us. But here comes the hopeful part: all of us can do something about it. Combating loneliness does not require money, school degrees, or great skills. It only requires humanity. We all have the power to offer a moment of companionship, a small gesture that can change someone's day, even life.

Maybe it is a neighbor who lives alone and whom we have never greeted beyond a "good morning." Maybe it's a family member we have not spoken to for months because life got too busy. Or it may be that co-worker who always seems off, but who we have never asked how they are doing. In all these cases, a small action – a message, a call, an invitation – can open a door that loneliness and isolation have tried to close.

Acts of love don't always feel great. Many times, they feel simple: listen without haste, share a meal, accompany someone to the supermarket, offer help with medication, or sit down to talk for a while. There is no small act when it comes to human union. And if you are the one who is feeling lonely, remember something important: asking for company is also an act of love. Of love for yourself. Recognizing that life is easier when shared doesn't make you weak. It makes you brave. It makes you human. And it allows you to discover that, even when you think you are alone, there are hands ready to reach you. In the month of love, let us resolve to redefine what it means to love. Not just celebrating couples but celebrating the connection that binds us together as a community. Our community is warmest when one person decides to approach another. When a gesture breaks the ice. When someone decides that no one around them deserves to feel isolated. Because in the end, fighting loneliness is not only about accompanying others: it is about remembering that we all count, that we all matter, and that love, when shared, always has room for one more.

En Febrero, mes del amor, pensamos en flores, tarjetas, cenas especiales y acciones románticas. Pero el amor es mucho más grande que eso. El amor también es comunitario, cotidiano y sencillo. Es una llamada hecha a tiempo, un saludo amable en la calle, una visita inesperada o una invitación a un café. Por eso, hoy más que nunca, necesitamos recordar que combatir la soledad es uno de los actos de amor más importantes que podemos dar.

Durante el invierno las temperaturas pueden mantenernos más tiempo dentro de casa y la soledad se siente con más fuerza. Muchas personas viven lejos de sus familiares, trabajan desde casa o tienen impedimentos de movilidad. Y, aunque no siempre lo digamos, hay días en los que el silencio pesa. La soledad no siempre luce como imaginamos. No es únicamente estar sin compañía; a veces es estar rodeado de gente y aun así sentirse invisible. Es mirar por la ventana el paisaje y preguntarse si alguien piensa en nosotros. Pero aquí viene la parte esperanzadora: todos nosotros podemos hacer algo al respecto. Combatir la soledad no requiere dinero, títulos escolares, ni grandes habilidades. Solo requiere humanidad. Todos tenemos el poder de ofrecer un momento de compañía, un gesto pequeño que puede cambiar el día, incluso la vida de alguien.

Tal vez sea un vecino que vive solo y al que nunca hemos saludado más allá de un "buenos días". Tal vez sea un familiar con quien no hablamos desde hace meses porque la vida se volvió demasiado ocupada. O



puede ser ese compañero de trabajo que siempre parece apagado, pero a quien nunca le hemos preguntado cómo está. En todos esos casos, una acción pequeña —un mensaje, una llamada, una invitación— puede abrir una puerta que la soledad y el aislamiento ha intentado cerrar.

Los actos de amor no siempre se sienten grandiosos. Muchas veces se sienten simples: escuchar sin prisa, compartir una comida, acompañar a alguien al supermercado, ofrecer ayuda con un medicamento, o sentarse a conversar un rato. No hay acto pequeño cuando se trata de unión humana. Y si tú eres quien está sintiendo soledad, recuerda algo importante: pedir compañía también es un acto de amor. De amor hacia ti mismo. Reconocer que la vida es más fácil cuando se comparte no te hace débil. Te hace valiente. Te hace humano. Y te permite descubrir que, aun cuando creas que estás solo, hay manos dispuestas a alcanzarte. En el mes del amor, propongámonos redefinir lo que significa amar. No solo celebrar a las parejas, sino celebrar la conexión que nos une como comunidad. Nuestra comunidad es más cálida cuando una persona decide acercarse a otra. Cuando un gesto rompe el hielo. Cuando alguien decide que nadie a su alrededor merece sentirse aislado. Porque al final, combatir la soledad no es solo acompañar a otros: es recordar que todos contamos, que todos importamos, y que el amor, cuando se comparte, siempre tiene espacio para uno más.



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Welcome to the MSU Latinx Film Festival (LxFF), taking place from February 19-22, 2026, after a four-year hiatus. The festival will showcase independent cinema from Latin America, Spain, and the U.S., focusing on social justice themes like immigration, race, class, and gender. This edition will emphasize Immigration and Venezuela. Most films and special events will be free and open to the public.

Bienvenidos al Festival de Cine Latinx de MSU (LxFF), que se celebrará del 19 al 22 de Febrero de 2026, tras una pausa de cuatro años. El festival presentará cine independiente de Latinoamérica, España y Estados Unidos, centrándose en temas de justicia social como la inmigración, la raza, la clase social y el género. Esta edición hará especial hincapié en la inmigración y Venezuela. La mayoría de las películas y eventos especiales serán gratuitos y abiertos al público.



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06 THE COMMUNITY VOICE LA VOZ / FEBRUARY 2026

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) - Chicano Movement Day is born Feb. 2nd!

This treaty, signed on February 2, 1848, ended the war between the United States and Mexico. By its terms, Mexico ceded 55 percent of its territory, including the present-day states California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming. Mexico also relinquished all claims to Texas, and recognized the Rio Grande as the southern boundary with the United States.



Citation: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo [Exchange copy]; 2/2/1848; Perfected Treaties, 1778 - 1945; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

This is the exchange copy of the treaty, written in both Spanish and English. This copy, given to the United States by Mexico, provides proof that the treaty was ratified by the Mexican government.

With the defeat of its army and the fall of the capital, Mexico City, in September 1847, the Mexican government surrendered to the United States and entered into negotiations to end the war. The peace talks were negotiated by Nicholas Trist, chief clerk of the State Department, who had accompanied General Winfield Scott as a diplomat and President Polk's representative. Trist and General Scott, after two previous unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a treaty with President Santa Anna, determined that the only way to deal with Mexico was as a conquered enemy.

Today, Chicanos celebrate this day as a call for justice, equality and respect for Americans of Mexican ancestry who have been treated as second class citizens in their own country. "We didn't emigrate from a foreign country, our land was taken and the border was changed overnight!" We became "strangers in our own land!" the February 2nd day is recognized as the birthday of "Chicanos!" -Dr. José A. Flores

Este tratado, firmado el 2 de febrero de 1848, puso fin oficialmente a la guerra entre México y Estados Unidos, con la cesión por parte de México del 55% de su territorio, incluyendo los actuales estados de California, Nevada, Utah, Nuevo México y partes de Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas y Wyoming. México también renunció a sus reclamos sobre Texas y reconoció el Río Grande como su frontera sur. Negociado por Nicholas Trist y el general Winfield Scott después de que las fuerzas estadounidenses capturaran la Ciudad de México, este tratado marcó un punto de inflexión en el trato a los territorios mexicanos. Esta fecha es conmemorada por los chicanos como símbolo de su lucha por la justicia y la igualdad, expresando que les arrebataron su tierra y se convirtieron en "extranjeros en su propia tierra".



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a round, brown, textured plate. On the plate is a single, large, soft taco. The taco is filled with shredded meat (likely carnitas), diced white onions, diced red tomatoes, and fresh cilantro. The person is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt.

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El 2026 y la Encrucijada Latina: Un Llamado a la Vigilancia 2026 and the Latin Crossroads: A Call to Vigilance



By Edgar León

La comunidad latina en los Estados Unidos se encuentra hoy en una situación crítica sin precedentes. Al iniciar este 2026, el miedo que enfrentan los más de 60 millones de hispanos en este país no es solo por la incertidumbre, sino de una emergencia que exige una movilización inmediata de la conciencia cívica. Los datos actuales no mienten: la promesa del "Sueño Americano" se ha convertido en una peñadilla real.

Todos los días siento vergüenza ajena de ver cómo están criminalizando a mi raza Latina a lo West Side Story. El repetir una mentira en discursos políticos, infectando la mente de los que creen todo lo que escuchan y absorben el miedo de que somos criminales, violadores, gangueros solo ha creado una polarización entre la sociedad de USA. Por causa de esta mentira, se ha activado la persecución de nuestras familias ignorando todos los derechos humanos y constitucionales.

Por esa razón, la prioridad absoluta para nuestras familias ha dejado de ser una aspiración de ascenso para convertirse en una estrategia de supervivencia. Con más del 50% de nuestra comunidad señalando la inflación como su mayor enemigo, no estamos hablando de meras estadísticas macroeconómicas. Hablamos de mesas con menos comida, de padres, madres y niños con dos trabajos que aún no pueden cubrir la renta de un apartamento y de una crisis de vivienda que amenaza con desplazarlos de los barrios que nosotros los latinos ayudamos a construir. El mensaje es claro: la estabilidad económica de los latinos es hoy un privilegio que se puede acabar en cualquier momento.

Lo más alarmante de este año 2026 es el factor miedo. Que casi la mitad de los latinos temen ser víctima de violencia política no es una percepción infundada; es el síntoma de una nación fracturada. Cuando el 65% de nosotros siente que es un "mal momento" para ser latino en USA, debemos entender que la sociedad se sigue dividiendo. Ya no se trata solo de quién nos representa en Washington, sino de la seguridad de caminar por la calle sin ser arrestados por nuestra apariencia o nuestro idioma.

En este 2026 la intensificación de las políticas de cumplimiento de la ley de inmigración ha cruzado una línea peligrosa. El miedo a la deportación ya no se limita a quienes no tienen documentos. Está afectando a familias mixtas y a ciudadanos legales que temen ser arrastrados por un sistema de vigilancia cruel cada vez más agresivo. La educación de nuestros hijos y niñas no se cuidan su salud pública. Los latinos están sufriendo porque el miedo está obligando a nuestra

gente a esconderse, un retroceso que no podemos permitir ni quedar en silencio.

Este artículo no busca sembrar el pánico, sino sembrar la preparación con información real. El 2026 es un año de elecciones de mitad de período y, más que nunca, el voto latino no puede ser un cheque en blanco para ningún partido. Debemos exigir protecciones claras para nuestros derechos civiles, soluciones reales al costo de vida y un freno a la dictadura que amenaza los pesos y contrapesos de esta democracia.

Para asegurar el bienestar de la comunidad latina en 2026, es importante conocer y utilizar los recursos de apoyo disponibles que abarcan desde la defensa legal hasta la asistencia económica. En el **ámbito legal y migratorio, organizaciones como el National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) y ImmigrationLawHelp.org** ofrecen representación y guías sobre "Conoce tus derechos" para enfrentar el discriminación racial y procesos de deportación, mientras que la **Hispanic Federation** brinda ayuda técnica para trámites de ciudadanía y DACA. Para quienes enfrentan la crisis de vivienda y el alto costo de vida, el portal oficial **USA.gov** permite acceder al programa **LIHEAP** para el pago de servicios públicos, al **TANF** para asistencia en efectivo a familias con niños, y a nuevos subsidios estatales para compradores de vivienda. En cuanto a la salud, la línea nacional "**Su Familia**" y el portal **CuidadodeSalud.gov** siguen siendo canales vitales para obtener cobertura médica a bajo costo y orientación en español. Finalmente, instituciones históricas como **LULAC y UnidosUS** actúan como escudos de defensa civil, proporcionando programas de empoderamiento económico, becas educativas y una plataforma de denuncia ante actos de discriminación, asegurando que las familias latinas tengan las herramientas necesarias para navegar los desafíos de este año.

Es hora de despertar. El no actuar y escondernos son un lujo que los latinos en 2026 no podemos permitir. La protección del futuro de los niños depende de nuestra capacidad para reconocer que hay que denunciar los hechos reales en todos los medios de comunicación.

The Latino community in the United States currently finds itself in an unprecedented critical situation. As we begin this year 2026, the fear faced by more than 60 million Hispanics in this country is not just due to uncertainty, but an emergency that demands an immediate mobilization of civic conscience. Current data does not lie: the promise of the "American Dream" has turned into a real nightmare.

Every day, I feel a sense of collective shame seeing how my Latino race is being criminalized in a "West Side Story" fashion. The repetition of lies in political speeches—infesting the minds of those who believe everything they hear and absorbing the fear that we are criminals, rapists, and gang members—has only created polarization within U.S. society. Because of these lies, the persecution of our families has been activated, ignoring all human and constitutional rights. For this reason, the absolute priority for our families has ceased to be an aspiration for upward mobility and has become a strategy for survival.

With more than 50% of our community pointing to inflation as their greatest enemy, we are not talking about mere macroeconomic statistics. We are talking about tables with less food; about fathers, mothers, and children with two jobs who still cannot cover the rent of an apartment; and about a housing crisis that threatens to displace us from the neighborhoods that we Latinos helped build. The message is clear: economic stability for Latinos today is a privilege that can end at any moment.

The most alarming factor of this year 2026 is fear. The fact that almost half of Latinos fear being victims of political violence is not an unfounded perception; it is the symptom of a fractured nation. When 65% of us feel it is a "bad time" to be Latino in the USA, we must understand that society continues to divide. It is no longer just about who represents us in Washington, but about the safety of walking down the street without being arrested for our appearance or our language.

In 2026, the intensification of immigration enforcement policies has crossed a dangerous line. The fear of deportation is no longer limited to those without documents. It is affecting mixed-status families and legal citizens who fear being swept up by an increasingly aggressive and cruel surveillance system. Our children's education and public health are not being cared for. Latinos are suffering because fear is forcing our people into hiding, a setback

we cannot allow nor remain silent about.

This article does not seek to create panic, but rather to push for preparation through real information. 2026 is a midterm election year and, more than ever, the Latino vote cannot be a blank check for any political party. We must demand clear protections for our civil rights, real solutions to the cost of living, and a stop to the dictatorship that threatens the checks and balances of this democracy.

To ensure the well-being of the Latino community in 2026, it is essential to utilize the diverse range of support resources available, from legal defense to economic assistance. For those seeking legal and immigration aid, organizations such as the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) and ImmigrationLawHelp.org provide vital representation and "Know Your Rights" guides, while the Hispanic Federation offers technical expertise for DACA and citizenship applications. Families facing challenges with housing and the cost of living can turn to USA.gov to access the LIHEAP program for utility payments, TANF for cash assistance, and various new state subsidies for homebuyers.

Furthermore, maintaining health and advocacy remains a top priority. The "Su Familia" national hotline and the CuidadodeSalud.gov portal serve as critical channels for obtaining low-cost medical coverage and health orientation in Spanish. Complementing these services, historic advocacy institutions like LULAC and UnidosUS act as shields for civil defense, offering a platform to report discrimination while simultaneously providing educational scholarships and economic empowerment programs to strengthen the community.

It is time to wake up. Inaction and hiding are a luxury that Latinos in 2026 can no longer afford. Protecting the future of our children depends on our ability to recognize that real facts affecting Latinos must be reported across all media outlets.

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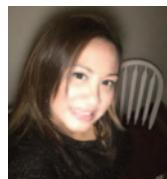
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Jesse and Juana Gonzales and the Fight to Preserve Michigan's Chicano Soul



By Primavera Flores

Walking into the Gonzales home is like entering a living archive of Chicano History. Jesse and Juana Gonzales, both active advocates, agreed to meet with me at their Lansing home, and we were instantly surrounded by decades of evidence of Chicano art, history, and culture, much of which our parents from the baby boomer generation talked about. Every wall is lined with Jesse's photography, artwork by famous Latino artists, magnets, and cultural decor. Tucked away in the basement is a plethora of magazines, old newspaper clippings, collectibles, books on Latino culture (many of which are no longer available), and ancient cultural artifacts. As Jesse settles into his couch to tell me about his lifetime of work, he proudly gazes at a mantel over the fireplace, filled with his treasured collection of Virgen de Guadalupe statues, amassed over 20-30 years. Honoring his father, Guadalupe, each figurine tells a story of culture and Latino resilience in Michigan. At 78 years old, Jesse truly embodies what it means to be a keeper of memory, a documenter of struggle, and a bridge between generations, with his wife, Juana Gonzales, actively supporting and leading community efforts alongside him.

Jesse Gonzales was born in Albion, Michigan. He was the first of four brothers and two sisters to be born in the Mitten State. His father migrated from Mexico to the U.S in 1909 and settled in Michigan around the 1940s to work in fields and factories. His father raised his large family, instilling a work ethic and a sense of freedom that would shape Jesse's entire life. Jesse says, with his voice catching with emotion, "My father left it up to us to choose our own paths." He said, "You boys—, you are American!. This is your country! Though his father worried about discrimination, he never pushed his children to speak Spanish; instead, he gave them something more valuable—permission to pursue their passions without restraint.



he worked on farms and in foundries. It wasn't glamorous work, he says, but work that taught discipline and purpose and paid the way for his college. As one of the first in his family to finish high school, and the first to earn a college degree, he opened doors not just for himself, but for the generations that followed. Jesse attended his first year of college at Western Michigan University and went on to earn his Bachelors degree from Michigan State University in 1971 later

earning his Masters degree from the University

of Michigan in 1979. But the education he found himself most passionate about came from a camera his brother bought him in high school. What began as snapshots of family events became a lifelong mission to document Latino and Chicano history. "When I started doing different work, it mainly dealt with Tejanos or people from California, and I started saying, well, I grew up in the state of Michigan, what was our history?"

Jesse recalls that it was during his first years at Western Michigan University that he noticed there were so few Latinos on campus. It made him feel disconnected from what he observed as the growing

Chicano consciousness of the time.

When he transferred to MSU, everything changed, he said, "There were more of us students, faculty, and community."

There was a presence. That presence fueled his early activism and helped shape his identity as

an artist, historian, and advocate for the Chicano community. Later, at the University of Michigan, he became deeply involved in producing newsletters, films, and media projects that highlighted Latino issues and culture. There, Jesse met and became good friends with Julio Perazza, a Puerto Rican photographer from Detroit whom he considered his compadre and mentor, and who helped him master the craft of photography.

Jesse says, "I wasn't trying to be a journalist." He says. "I just wanted to capture who we were." Together, they worked on projects including a film to recruit Latinos and Chicanos to the University of Michigan. Jesse's photography captured everything from community events to the Tulip Festival in Holland, Michigan, from murals in San Antonio to the historic moment when Cesar Chavez came to Lansing. His lens focused on cultural artifacts, celebrations, and the faces of people building a movement. "I'm a history buff," he explains, "so wherever I go, Texas, the valley, California, I try to search out what the cultural artifacts of Latinos and Chicanos are, wherever they might be." Over the decades, Jesse amassed more than 12,000 photographs, now preserved in collections at Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and national archives such as Chicana por Mi Raza. His photography is featured in the book 500 Years of Chicano History by Elizabeth Martibez. Jesse's most significant contribution evolved during a period of statewide layoffs, when he suddenly found himself without work. Instead of stepping back, he turned to history with renewed urgency. He began combing through libraries, archives, newspapers, and private collections for every reference he could find of Latinos in Michigan. He wrote each discovery onto a massive work calendar until one day he realized that he had created something extraordinary, a chronological map of Michigan Latino history dating back to 1782. That calendar evolved into the Calendario del Movimiento Chicano en Michigan, an unprecedented cultural project that combined research, community art, and historical documentation. It remains one of the most detailed state-specific records of Chicano history in the country.



While he worked for the Supportive Services program at Michigan State, Jesse helped Chicano and minority students find tutors or the support they needed to stay in school. When he was wrongfully terminated from that job, Juana Gonzales organized a coalition that included Native Americans, Iranian students, Black graduate students, other Chicanos, and the activist group Chispa. They went before the Board of Trustees with their lawyer Zoltan Ferency, and won Jesse's case against the university. "We won the case against the university," Juana says proudly, remembering how they fought for what they felt was right.

Juana Gonzalez has been Jesse's partner in love and in activism for over 50 years. They just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a trip to Cheech Marin's gallery in Riverside, California—a pilgrimage to see Chicano art honored in a permanent collection. But long before that celebration, Juana was an unstoppable force on Michigan campuses. During her time at MSU, she became part of Chispa, a powerful organization of Chicanas like Diana Rivera, Rebecca Sanchez, and Maria Alfaro, who strategized with precision and purpose. "We were very, very strong Chicanas," she remembers with a laugh. "If something needed to happen, we figured out how to make it happen. When some of her peers would tell her that she wouldn't get anywhere protesting, she replied, "Oh, but I'll feel good about doing it." She began her activism in high school and was once kicked home

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brother

intervened, explaining to her father that she was simply saying what everyone wanted to say. That early defiance set the tone for a lifetime of speaking truth to power.

Her boldness once served a greater purpose for minorities in Michigan. In a time when discrimination was widespread, Juana served on the search committee for Michigan State's president. Juana was one of only two minorities on the panel. When candidates applied, she would call their previous institutions to ask how they treated minorities, janitors, professors, and anyone who wasn't white. If the answers didn't satisfy her, she would leak the information to the student newspaper, effectively ending their candidacy. "I would have gotten into a lot of trouble," she admits, but her covert operation ensured that Michigan State's leadership would not ignore the needs of minority students.

When you ask Jesse and Juana about the state of Chicano and Latino life today, Jesse stresses the importance of involvement. To the next generation of activists, he said, "Get involved in anything that takes you beyond your family. That's how you learn who you are." When talking about the people who influenced him most, Jesse says, "It was my father," pausing with emotion in his voice, he says, "He let me be who I wanted to be. He taught me to work hard, not take advantage of anyone, and to contribute. That freedom is what made everything possible."

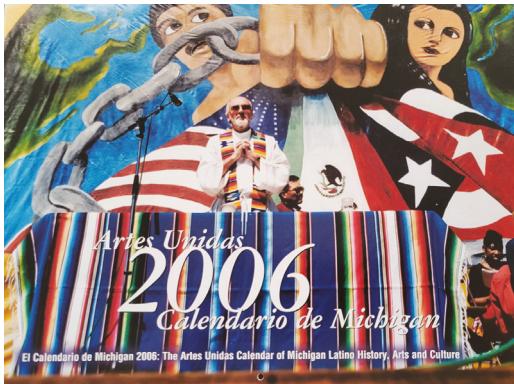
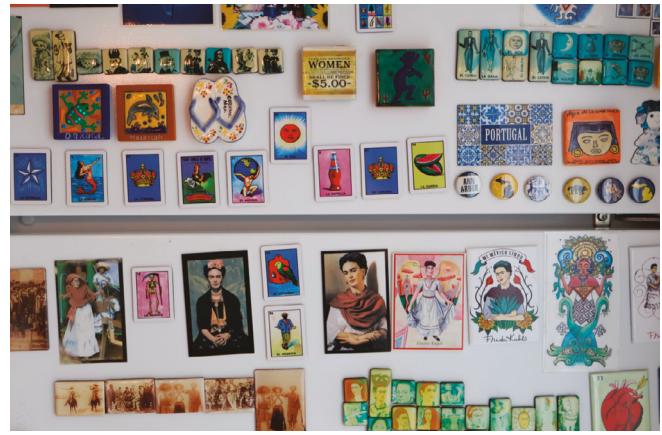
As an advocate for creating equal opportunity for all Chicano students in Michigan, Jesse says, he still cannot understand the push from the current Trump administration to dismantle Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs that have helped so many. He says, "These programs help people. They don't take away from anyone. We're Americans too. My family fought in Vietnam. We deserve the same

rights and opportunities!"

Juana, on the other hand, urges young people to get out there and take ac-

tion now!. She said, "Stop just socializing online and start organizing!" "Knock on doors. Go to the north side or an area you normally don't canvas. Get our people motivated to vote. Don't wait for the older generation. We're still here, but we need you." She laughs at her own feisty nature and says, "One thing that will never change until she is unable: she will never stop attending rallies or protesting for her community." Juana says before leaving her home for the events, "I tell Jesse not to worry. I can still run!" Juana credits her outspoken parents and her fierce circle of Chicana friends for shaping her courage and resilience. She said, "We supported each other, and we're still supporting each other. We're still out there. Still showing up and still fighting." It is because of people like the Gonzales's that more Latino/a/x's are elected to office.

The legacy the Gonzales's have built in Michigan stretches far beyond their own accomplishments. Through photographs, archives, protests, organizing, and sheer persistence, they have ensured that change was built day by day, and the history of Chicanos in Michigan will not be forgotten.



El Calendario de Michigan 2006: The Artes Unidos Calendar of Michigan Latino History, Arts and Culture

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THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
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INITIATIVE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST INEQUALITY

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HONORING THE LEGACY
BLACK BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHWEST GRAND RAPIDS (1940-2026)

FROM 1940 TO 2026, BLACK BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ON GRAND RAPIDS' SOUTHWEST AND SOUTH SIDES HAS BEEN SHAPED BY RESILIENCE, DETERMINATION, AND COMMUNITY STRENGTH—OFTEN IN THE FACE OF SYSTEMIC BARRIERS. EVEN SO, THE GROWTH OF BLACK BUSINESSES HAS ALWAYS BEEN LIMITED BY LACK OF CAPITAL ACCESS, UNFAIR PRACTICES, HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AND REDLINING, WHICH ALL CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESTRICTIONS ON BLACK FAMILIES AND ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTHWEST GRAND RAPIDS AND THE SOUTHEAST SIDE. GRADUALISM HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE.

IN THE 1940S, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY WAS SEVERELY LIMITED. A NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE REPORT REVEALED THAT OUT OF 1,330 EMPLOYEES IN STUDIED FIRMS, ONLY 10 WERE BLACK WORKERS MOST PLACED IN LOW-WAGE, "MENIAL" POSITIONS. THESE INEQUITIES LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR DECADES OF ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING AND STILL GLARING GAPS EXIST.

THE 1960S COULD BE CONSIDERED A TURNING POINT, AS LOCAL LEADERS AND RESIDENTS JOINED THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND FOUGHT FOR FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY. THESE EFFORTS HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF BUSINESS PEOPLE AND ENTREPRENEURS.

MORE RECENTLY, MILESTONES SUCH AS THE 2022 RENAMING OF FRANKLIN STREET IN HONOR OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., THE SUCCESS OF THE 49507 MURALS PROJECT, THE CAPITAL ACCESS FUND OF WEST MICHIGAN AND INITIATIVES LIKE BLACK VOICES @ THE RIVER, GRAND RAPIDS AREA BLACK BUSINESSES (GRABB) AND THE WEST MICHIGAN BLACK BUSINESS ALLIANCE ALL CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY, CULTURE, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. TODAY, THESE INITIATIVES UPLIFT LOCAL BUSINESSES WHILE ALSO PRESERVING COMMUNITY STORIES.

THIS JOURNEY REFLECTS NOT ONLY THE STRUGGLE, BUT SOME TRIUMPHS ALSO SHOWING HOW BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES CONTINUE TO GRIND, SHAPE, SHINE, STRENGTHEN, AND INSPIRE GRAND RAPIDS' SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR BUT SERVE AS INSPIRING MODELS FOR ALL OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

Una Nueva Era de Liderazgo Latino en Michigan

Por Dr. José A Flores Continuación de la versión del artículo en español pag. 03

La concejal de la ciudad de Detroit, Gabriela Santiago Romero, encarna esta nueva era. Como la primera latina elegida para representar al Distrito 6, aporta la experiencia vivida de la comunidad inmigrante del suroeste de Detroit al ayuntamiento. Su trabajo en justicia ambiental y desarrollo equitativo refleja las prioridades de un distrito moldeado por la industria, la resiliencia y el orgullo cultural.

Carlos López, el actual alcalde de Fennville, Michigan, fue elegido para el cargo en noviembre de 2023 y su mandato se extenderá hasta noviembre de 2027. López es el primer alcalde hispano de la ciudad de Fennville y ha vivido en la zona durante más de 30 años. Se ha centrado en el desarrollo económico, el apoyo comunitario, la participación cívica y la inclusión, la seguridad pública y el apoyo a los trabajadores agrícolas, y ha liderado la ciudad de Fennville con gran devoción por su propósito. Lansing, Michigan, fue testigo recientemente de un cambio drástico en la composición de su Ayuntamiento, que ahora cuenta con la mitad de su representación por miembros de la comunidad hispana/latina, quienes aportan nuevas perspectivas que representan a las familias estadounidenses e inmigrantes bilingües y biculturales, con inquietudes e ideas específicas para mejorar las condiciones de vida en su ciudad. Felicitamos a los concejales de Lansing: Clara Martínez, Trini López-Pehlivanoglu, Deyanira Nevárez Martínez, Ph.D., y Jeremy Garza, por su compromiso con una mentalidad de servicio comunitario.

El movimiento de liderazgo se extiende más allá del gobierno. En el ámbito educativo, donde los estudiantes latinos representan una proporción creciente de la matrícula, los superintendentes latinos están emergiendo como líderes transformadores. El Dr. Abel López, de las Escuelas Públicas Godfrey-Lee, dirige uno de los distritos con mayor presencia latina en el estado. Su compromiso con la educación bilingüe, la enseñanza culturalmente receptiva y la participación familiar demuestra lo que se puede lograr cuando el liderazgo refleja a la comunidad a la que sirve. De manera similar, el Dr. Francisco López, de las Escuelas Comunitarias de East Point, ha defendido la equidad y las reformas centradas en el estudiante en un distrito que experimenta un rápido cambio demográfico. Su liderazgo resalta la importancia de los administradores latinos en la creación de sistemas educativos que comprendan y promuevan la

diversidad de estudiantes.

Estos líderes no son ejemplos aislados. Forman parte de un grupo más amplio, fortalecido por organizaciones como la Asociación de Administradores y Superintendentes Latinos de Michigan (MI ALAS), que trabaja para desarrollar y apoyar a líderes educativos latinos en todo el estado. Sus esfuerzos garantizan que la próxima generación de superintendentes, directores y legisladores refleje mejor la realidad multicultural de Michigan.

El progreso que vemos hoy es el resultado de décadas de defensa, por parte de organizadores comunitarios, educadores bilingües, asociaciones vecinales y medios de comunicación latinos que han insistido en la visibilidad y la voz. Publicaciones como The Community Voice/La Voz Magazine han desempeñado un papel fundamental al documentar este proceso, informar a los votantes y celebrar los logros de los líderes latinos en todo el estado. ¡Un liderazgo responsable requiere voces activistas!

Sin embargo, este momento no se trata solo de representación. ¡Se trata de poder! El liderazgo significa el poder de moldear presupuestos, influir en políticas y determinar el futuro de nuestras escuelas, vecindarios y ciudades. Los líderes latinos están asumiendo ese poder con integridad, visión y un profundo compromiso con la comunidad. Una persona negra, morena e indígena de color educada ayuda a nuestras comunidades a acceder a la estructura de poder de la sociedad y nos permite impulsarlas. No debemos aceptar sistemas que preparan a nuestros hijos para continuar con nuestros roles sociales tradicionales de sirvientes de segunda clase que ocupan los puestos de menor nivel en nuestra economía, cuando tenemos el potencial de ser jefes de industria, médicos, abogados, empresarios, gobernadores. ¡Funcionarios gubernamentales y líderes cívicos! ¡Debemos exigir que nuestras instituciones rindan cuentas y eduquen y preparen adecuadamente a nuestros hijos para el liderazgo! Este es el ejemplo que están dando los líderes destacados en esta edición de la revista The Community Voice/La Voz y en futuras ediciones.

La comunidad latina de Michigan ya no pide un lugar en la mesa. Está ocupando el lugar que le corresponde en el centro de la vida cívica. ¡Y esto es solo el principio!



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Caribbean Communities Alarmed by U.S. Naval Buildup

La Comunidad Caribeña Alarmados con el Aumento Militar de EE.UU.

When U.S. naval ships and aircraft began appearing off the coasts of Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands in recent weeks, the reaction across the region was immediate and emotional. For many residents, especially in Puerto Rico, the sudden military presence stirred memories that never fully healed.

In towns like Ceiba, Vieques, and Ponce, residents described the sight of amphibious vehicles and low-flying aircraft as "a shock," "a reminder," and "a warning." The Pentagon framed the buildup as part of regional security operations, but for communities with a long history of military occupation, the explanation did little to calm nerves.

"We've lived this before."

A retired teacher from Vieques said the images brought back memories of the Navy's decades of bombing exercises. **"People here carry that history in our bones. When we see ships lining the horizon again, it feels like the past is trying to return."**

"They say it's training, but nobody tells us anything."

In Arroyo, where U.S. Marines conducted amphibious landings, residents said they were caught off guard. **"We woke up to helicopters and armored vehicles. No notice, no explanation. That's what scares — the silence."**

"Vieques taught us to be vigilant."

Younger Puerto Ricans say the buildup feels like a test of community resolve. **"Our parents fought to get the Navy out. We're not going to let history repeat itself."**

Regional ripple effects

Across the Caribbean, the buildup has sparked concern about geopolitical tensions involving Venezuela, drug-interdiction operations, and the possibility of the region becoming a staging ground for larger conflicts.

In the Dominican Republic, radio callers have questioned the scale of the U.S. presence. **"When the Caribbean fills with warships, it's never just routine."**

In Cuba, residents express a mix of fear and resignation. **"We've lived under tension for decades. But seeing more military activity so close — it makes people uneasy."**

"We want safety, not militarization."

Caribbean communities understand the need for security operations, but many argue that the scale and visibility of the buildup feel disproportionate.

A community leader in Ponce summarized the sentiment: "We want peace. We want stability. **But we don't want to become collateral in someone else's conflict."**

A call for transparency

Across Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, the message is consistent: people want information, clarity, and respect.

Tell us the truth," said a resident in Ceiba. "If this is temporary, say it. If it's something bigger, we deserve to know."

Los buques y aeronaves de la Armada estadounidense frente a las costas de Puerto Rico y otras islas del Caribe han provocado fuertes reacciones emocionales entre los residentes, particularmente en Puerto Rico, donde resurgen los recuerdos de ocupaciones militares anteriores. Las comunidades describen la presencia militar como alarmante y evocadora de episodios dolorosos del pasado, y exigen transparencia sobre los motivos del

despliegue. Muchos jóvenes puertorriqueños expresan su deseo de evitar que se repitan los problemas militares del pasado. Esta presencia ha generado preocupación regional sobre las tensiones geopolíticas, lo que ha dado lugar a llamamientos a la paz y a una comunicación clara por parte de las autoridades para evitar la inquietud entre la población. En general, existe una demanda colectiva de información y respeto con respecto a las acciones militares en la región.



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February Events / Eventos en Febrero

Disney On Ice February 5-8, 2026 Grand Rapids, Mi

Disney On Ice presents "Road Trip Adventures," featuring beloved characters from Aladdin, Frozen, Toy Story 4, The Lion King, and Mary Poppins Returns. Tickets go on sale on August 19th at 10:00 AM, with prices subject to change based on market conditions. Purchases can be made via the box office or online at Ticketmaster.com, with a limit of 8 tickets per order.

Disney On Ice presenta "Road Trip Adventures", con los entrañables personajes de Aladdin, Frozen, Toy Story 4, El Rey León y El Regreso de Mary Poppins. Las entradas saldrán a la venta el 19 de agosto a las 10:00 a. m., y los precios pueden variar según las condiciones del mercado. Las entradas se pueden adquirir en la taquilla o en línea a través de Ticketmaster.com, con un límite de 8 entradas por compra.

Grand Haven Home Show February 6-7, 2026 Grand Haven, Mi

Central Park Place in Grand Haven hosts a home show featuring various home improvement companies in the area. Attendees can explore offerings from builders to solar systems and windows. The event covers essentials such as swimming pools, doors, siding, bathroom upgrades, and outdoor improvements like patios and decks.

Central Park Place en Grand Haven acoge una feria de la vivienda que presenta a diversas empresas de reformas del hogar de la zona. Los asistentes pueden explorar la oferta de constructores, sistemas de energía solar y ventanas, entre otros productos y servicios. El evento abarca aspectos esenciales como piscinas, puertas, revestimientos exteriores, reformas de baños y mejoras para exteriores, como patios y terrazas.

Holland on Ice February 6-7, 2026 Holland, Mi

The coolest event on the Lakeshore returns to Downtown Holland Friday, February 6 and Saturday, February 7! As part LG Energy Solution's Holland on Ice, visitors are

invited to Downtown Holland to witness the nation's best professional ice carvers at work as they transform over 10,000 pounds of ice into incredible works of art! Holland on Ice is proudly sponsored by LG Energy Solution and hosted by Downtown Holland and Holland Parks and Recreation.

¡El evento más genial de la zona de los Grandes Lagos regresa al centro de Holland! Como parte de Holland on Ice, patrocinado por LG Energy Solution, se invita a los visitantes al centro de Holland para presenciar el trabajo de los mejores escultores de hielo profesionales del país, quienes transformarán más de 4500 kilos de hielo en increíbles obras de arte.

I-500 Snowmobile Race February 7, 2026 Sault Sainte Marie, Mi

Central Park Place in Grand Haven hosts a home show featuring various home improvement companies in the area. Attendees can explore offerings from builders to solar systems and windows. The event covers essentials such as swimming pools, doors, siding, bathroom upgrades, and outdoor improvements like patios and decks.

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Michigan Ice Fest February 11-15, 2026 Munising, Mi

We are going all out for the 35th Annual Michigan Ice Fest, stay tuned for more info! A celebration of climbing in the Great Lakes with events for everyone from beginners to experts. Ice Climbing at its best. If you are a novice or an expert, this is one event you do not want to miss. Quietly nestled on the south shore of Lake Superior we have some of the country's most outstanding ice climbing and the Ice Fest is at the

center of it.

¡Lo daremos todo en el 35º Festival Anual de Hielo de Michigan!

¡Estén atentos para más información!

Una celebración de la escalada en los Grandes Lagos con eventos para todos, desde principiantes hasta expertos.

Escalada en hielo en su máxima expresión. Si eres principiante o experto, este es un evento que no te puedes perder. Ubicado en la tranquila orilla sur del Lago Superior, contamos con algunos de los mejores lugares para la escalada en hielo del país, y el Festival de Hielo es el epicentro de todo.

Snowfest 2026: Muskegon's Largest Winter Festival February 21, 2026 Muskegon, Mi

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of Snowfest on February 21, 2026, organized by JCI Greater Muskegon. This premier winter festival features a full weekend of family-friendly activities, local cuisine, and community events in downtown Muskegon, including the Battle of the Bowls Chili Cook-Off, tournaments, comedy shows, axe throwing, and more. Supported by proceeds benefiting local nonprofit organizations, Snowfest showcases the vibrant Muskegon community.

Celebra el 40.º aniversario de Snowfest el 21 de febrero de 2026, organizado por JCI Greater Muskegon. Este importante festival de invierno ofrece un fin de semana repleto de actividades para toda la familia, gastronomía local y eventos comunitarios en el centro de Muskegon, incluyendo el concurso de chili Battle of the Bowls, torneos, espectáculos de comedia, lanzamiento de hachas y mucho más.

West Michigan Home and Garden Show February 26-28, 2026 Grand Rapids, Mi

Michigan's premier Home & Garden Show packs DeVos Place with all of your home and garden dreams. Featuring home improvement products and services, remodelers and builders, situated



FEBRUARY 11-15TH 2026
MUNISING, MICHIGAN

between huge sprawling gardens, landscaping, and retail garden centers. Spring is in the air! Five free seminar stages filled with expert information plus the Garden and Art Market with accessories and décor! Meet the experienced professionals you need and start your projects!

La feria de hogar y jardín más importante de Michigan llega a DeVos Place, ofreciéndote todo lo que necesitas para hacer realidad tus sueños de hogar y jardín. Encontrarás productos y servicios para la mejora del hogar, remodeladores y constructores, rodeados de extensos jardines, paisajismo y centros de jardinería. ¡La primavera ya está aquí! Disfruta de cinco escenarios con seminarios gratuitos impartidos por expertos, además del Mercado de Jardín y Arte con accesorios y decoración. ¡Conoce a los profesionales que necesitas y comienza tus proyectos!

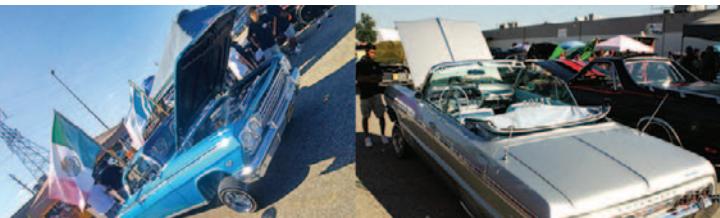
February 27, 2026 2026 Paddling Film Festival East Lansing, Mi

Join us for the 2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium film night featuring the 2026 Paddling Film Festival World Tour, with six award-winning films. The event runs from 7:00 PM with doors opening to an anticipated 10:00 PM end. Ticket prices are \$10 from February 1 to 26, and \$15 at the door, with children under 10 free with an adult ticket. Seating is first come, first serve, and age verification may be required.

Únase a nosotros en la noche de cine del Simposio de Aventuras Tranquilas 2026, que presenta el Festival Mundial de Cine de Piragüismo 2026, con seis películas galardonadas. El evento comienza a las 7:00 y se prevé que finalice a las 10:00. Las entradas cuestan \$10 del 1 al 26 de febrero y \$15 en la puerta. Los niños menores de 10 años entran gratis acompañados de un adulto con entrada.



1960 Chevy Impala owner Cody Burghdorf of Low 4 Life C.C. from Saginaw, MI



1962 Chevy Impala owner Morro

1960's Chevy Impala



1984 Chevy Caprice won Best Of Show Car owner Jose Noriega of Rollerz Only C.C. from Saginaw, MI



1964 Chevy Impala owner E Pogg with Mariachi dancer Jaer standing proud and excited



Latin Styles owner Alex Campos, getting Car Show Trophys ready!



1967 Oldsmobile Cutlass owner Laura Saldivar from GirlsintheHood Car Club from Grand Rapids, MI

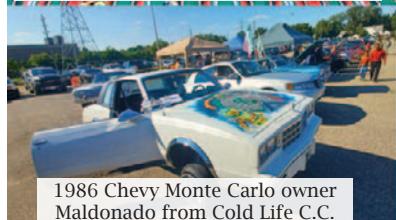
Homero Rodriguez & Jose Noriega



Tony Leal & son Vince with his bike winning Best of Show



Custom Lowrider Bike owner Nick Torres from Bike Club 616MI



1986 Chevy Monte Carlo owner Maldonado from Cold Life C.C.



1987 Chevy El Camino SS owner Meme Hernandez of Cold Life C.C. from Grand Rapids, MI



Plaza Mexico & Latin Styles parking lot full!

PLAZA MEXICO AND LATIN STYLES PRESENTS

Fiesta Mexico Lowrider Car & Bike Show



September 14, 2025, Plaza Mexico & Latin Styles held their "1st Annual Fiesta Mexico Lowrider Show" at 3375 S. Division Ave, Wyoming, MI. The car show held in Plaza Mexico spacious parking lot.

Latin Styles Alex Campos & Plaza Mexico organized this event with vendors of food & drinks, a live DJ mixing & jamming music, Folkloric Dancers of young children to adults Mexican traditional dancing. Plaza Mexico Mall had lots of vendors in their building with t-shirts, hats, jewelry, music CD's, dresses, restaurants and so much more!

People from Car Clubs came from Detroit, Saginaw, Kalamazoo, Holland, Wyoming & Grand Rapids.

The Best Car Trophy & \$500 went to 1984 Chevy Caprice owner Jose Noriega of Rollerz Only C.C. from Saginaw, MI.

The Best Bike Trophy & \$200 went to La Bamba Bike owner Vince Leal from Holland, MI.

The month of September was "HOT" with exciting Car Shows!

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CAR SHOWS UPDATE FEBRUARY 2026

CHROME & ICE

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Dort Financial Center
3501 Lapeer Road
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Tickets \$15 Adults - \$12 for youth (13 - 17 years)

Children 12 and under are free!

Detroit 73rd Annual AUTORAMA!

February 27 - March 1, 2026
Huntington Place (Cobo Hall)
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Detroit, MI 48226

\$30 Adults

\$10 Children 6-12 years old
Children 5 years FREE!



1994 GMC Sierra owner Tony Martinez from Xclusive C.C.



Folkloric dancers at Plaza Mexico & Latin Styles Car show

La Voz

Kenia Os, whose real name is Kenia Guadalupe Flores Osuna, is a Mexican singer and social media star who has transitioned from influencer to pop star. Her music blends modern pop with classic Latin rhythms, creating a distinctive sound with positive vibes and catchy melodies. The Mazatlan native has collaborated with artists like HaAsh, Miranda!, Peso Pluma, and La Joaqui. Os first found fame as a YouTube content creator, gaining millions of subscribers before going solo.

*Kenia Os, cuyo nombre real es Kenia Guadalupe Flores Osuna, es una cantante mexicana y estrella de las redes sociales que ha pasado de ser influencer a estrella del pop. Su música fusiona el pop moderno con ritmos latinos clásicos, creando un sonido distintivo con vibras positivas y melodías pegadizas. Originaria de Mazatlán, ha colaborado con artistas como Ha*Ash, Miranda!, Peso Pluma y La Joaqui. Saltó a la fama como creadora de contenido en YouTube, donde acumuló millones de suscriptores antes de lanzar su carrera como solista.*



Kenia Os



On February 8, Bad Bunny will step onto the Super Bowl LX halftime stage at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California. For Benito

Antonio Martinez Ocasio, the Puerto Rican artist known globally by his stage name, the moment represents far more than a career milestone.

His selection as the first solo Latino and Spanish-speaking headliner for the Super Bowl halftime show marks a cultural shift with political resonance, especially in the United States where questions of belonging, language, and identity are increasingly changed and challenged.

The Super Bowl halftime show remains one of the most watched entertainment events, regularly drawing audiences of over 100 million viewers. That visibility matters. In a country where Latinos make up nearly 20% of the population, and Spanish is the second-most spoken language, representation at this scale carries symbolic and practical weight.

Bad Bunny's performance places Latino culture, language, and artistry at the center of a national moment.

From the outset, Bad Bunny has framed the opportunity as collective rather than personal. "What I'm feeling goes beyond myself," he said when the performance was announced. "It's for those who came before me and ran countless yards so I could come in and score a touchdown... This is for my people, my culture, and our history."

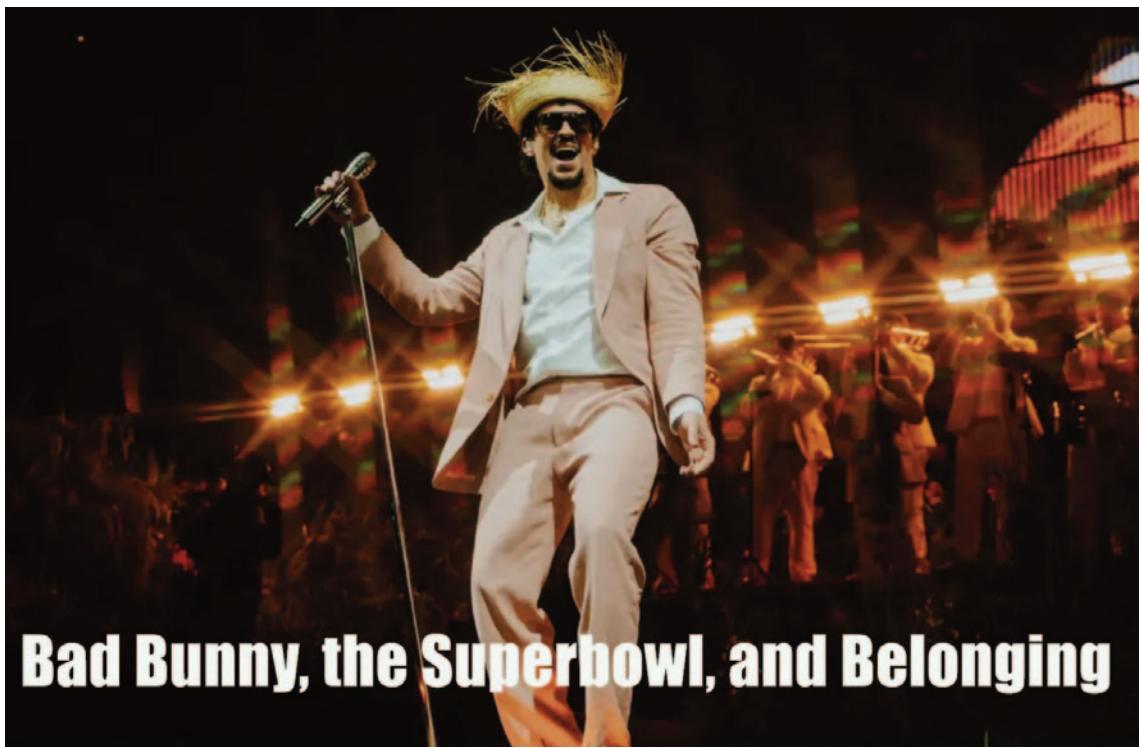
The message is clear: this isn't a story of crossover and assimilation. It's about Latino culture taking center stage without compromise.

The visibility has also prompted backlash. Conservative commentators and political figures have criticized the NFL's decision, citing Bad Bunny's use of Spanish and his outspoken views on immigration and federal enforcement policies. President Donald Trump publicly dismissed the selection while others questioned whether a Spanish-language performance belonged on what they framed as a "unifying" American stage.

Those critiques miss the point. The supposed controversy surrounding the halftime show is less about music and more about discomfort with demographic and cultural change. Latino influence in the United States is not emerging – it is established and expanding. Latino purchasing power in the U.S. now rivals the GDP of major national economies, topping \$4 trillion, and Latino audiences are among the fastest-growing segments for sports and live entertainment.

Excluding Latino voices from marquee cultural moments is not reflective of the country's reality.

Bad Bunny has never shielded away from acknowledging that tension. During his Saturday Night Live monologue, he addressed critics directly, reframing the moment as affirmation rather than



Bad Bunny, the Superbowl, and Belonging

provocation.

"It's more than a win for myself," he said in Spanish. "It's a win for all of us. Our footprint and our contribution in this country, no one will ever be able to take that away or erase it."

The political subtext of this Super Bowl extends beyond the halftime show. The NFL's broader lineup includes Green Day, a band with a long history of political commentary. Together, these choices perhaps suggest a league willing to acknowledge the country's cultural complexity rather than paper over it.

In the current U.S. climate, the real issue isn't about language or music; it's about power and belonging. Bad Bunny isn't merely a performer – he's a symbol of a demographic that is increasingly pivotal in American social and political life. His refusal to tour extensively in the continental U.S. amid concerns about ICE raids on predominantly Latino crowds, and then accepting the Super Bowl stage, underscores a deliberate, even strategic, use of his platform.

When Bad Bunny takes the stage in February, the halftime show will be more than a performance or a celebration. It will be a cultural maker of where the country is and where it is going, because Latinos, and immigrants as a whole, are not just part of America. They shape it.

El 8 de Febrero, Bad Bunny actuará en el espectáculo de medio tiempo del Super Bowl LX, lo que representa un hito cultural significativo al ser el primer artista latino y de habla hispana en encabezar el evento en solitario. Su elección pone de relieve cuestiones de pertenencia e identidad en Estados Unidos, donde los latinos constituyen casi el 20% de la población. Bad Bunny subraya que su actuación representa no solo su carrera, sino también una afirmación cultural colectiva. A pesar de las críticas recibidas por su idioma y sus opiniones, considera su participación como un triunfo para la cultura latina, destacando su impacto en Estados Unidos.

El escenario del Super Bowl refleja los cambios demográficos y culturales que se están produciendo, posicionando a Bad Bunny como un símbolo clave de la influencia y la presencia latina en la sociedad estadounidense contemporánea.

SPECIAL SEGMENT FEATURING THE FULL SLEATE OF BEST NEW ARTIST NOMINEES SET FOR 2026 GRAMMY AWARDS®

Current Grammy® Award nominees Addison Rae, Alex Warren, KATSEYE, Leon Thomas, Lola Young, Olivia Dean, SOMBR, and The Marías will perform in a special Best New Artist segment at the 2026 Grammy Awards®. Live from Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, Music's Biggest Night® will be hosted by Trevor Noah and will broadcast live on Sun, Feb. 1, 2026, at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on the CBS Television Network and will be available to stream live and on demand on Paramount+. Prior to the Telecast, the Grammy Awards Premiere Ceremony® will be broadcast live from the Peacock Theater at 12:30 p.m. PT and will be streamed live on [Grammy.com](#). Sabrina Carpenter has also been confirmed to perform and additional artists will be announced in the coming days.

The 2026 Grammy Awards will be produced by Fulwell Entertainment for the Recording Academy®. Ben Winston, Raj Kapoor, Jesse Collins, and Trevor Noah are executive producers.

Addison Rae is nominated for the first time this year in the Best New Artist category, backed by the success of her debut album *Addison*.

Alex Warren is also a first-time nominee this year, earning a Best New Artist nomination propelled by the success of his album *You'll Be Alright, Kid* and record breaking hit "Ordinary."

First-time Grammy nominees KATSEYE are up for two Grammy Awards this year: Best New Artist and Best Pop Duo/Group Performance ("Gabriela").

Grammy winner Leon Thomas is up for six Grammy Awards this year: Album Of The Year (MUTT), Best New Artist, Best R&B Performance ("MUTT (Live From NPR's Tiny Desk)"), Best Traditional R&B Performance ("VIBES DON'T LIE"), Best R&B Song ("YES IT IS"), and Best R&B Album (MUTT).

First-time Grammy nominee Lola Young is up for two Grammy Awards this year: Best New Artist and Best Pop Solo Performance ("Messy").

Olivia Dean is a first-time nominee this year as well, earning a Best New Artist nomination driven by the success of her acclaimed album *The Art*.

Of Loving and multiple charting singles, including "Man I Need."

First-time nominee SOMBR is also up for Best New Artist this year, fueled by the success of his debut album *I Barely Know Her*.

Rounding out the category, The Marías join this year's Best New Artist nominees following the success of their chart-topping single "Back To Me."

The current list of performers can be found [www.recordingacademy.com/press-releases/2026-grammys-best-new-artist-performers](#)

GRAMMY AWARDS PREMIOS GRAMMY 2026

Date / Fecha: February 1, 2026

Location / Lugar: Los Angeles, CA

Venue / Sede: Crypto.com Arena

GENERAL FIELD / CATEGORIAS PRINCIPALES

RECORD OF THE YEAR

ÁLBUM DEL AÑO

Bad Bunny - "DTMF"

Kendrick Lamar - GNX

Billie Eilish - *Wildeflower*

Clipse - *Let God Sort 'Em Out*

Chappell Roar - *The Subway*

Doachii - *Anxiety*

Kendrick Lamar & SZA

Additional nominees listed by the Academy

LADY GAGA

BEST NEW ARTIST

MEJOR ARTISTA NUEVO

Olivia Dean

Katseye

The Marías

Addison Rae

SOMBR

Leon Thomas

Alex Warren

Lola Young

SONG OF THE YEAR

CANCIÓN DEL AÑO

"Luther" - Kendrick Lamar

"DTMF" - Bad Bunny

Additional nominees listed by the Academy

TOP-NOMINATED ARTISTS

MÁS NOMINADOS

Bad Bunny 9

Lady Gaga 7

Sabrina Carpenter 7

Los actuales nominados a los premios Grammy®, Addison Rae, Alex Warren, KATSEYE, Leon Thomas, Lola Young, Olivia Dean, SOMBR y The Marías, actuarán en la ceremonia de los premios Grammy® de 2026, presentada por Trevor Noah el 1 de febrero de 2026. El evento se transmitirá en vivo a las 20:00 ET/17:00 PT por CBS y estará disponible en Paramount+. La ceremonia previa de los premios Grammy® tendrá lugar a las 12:30 PT. Cabe destacar que Addison Rae, Alex Warren y otros artistas son nominados por primera vez en diversas categorías, y Leon Thomas cuenta con seis nominaciones. Próximamente se anunciarán más artistas participantes.

La lista actual de artistas participantes se puede encontrar en [www.recordingacademy.com/press-releases/2026-grammys-best-new-artist-performers](#)

Oscar Nominations: 'Sinners' Breaks Nomination Record With 16 Nods

The 98th Academy Awards were dominated by Hollywood's most endangered species - highly original, studio-made films with hefty budgets. "Sinners," a horror fantasia set in the 1930s and rooted in Black culture, and "One Battle After Another," a primal scream about authoritarianism and citizen resistance, received nominations in most major categories, including picture, director, actor, supporting actress, supporting actor cinematography, and screenplay. The two films were produced by Warner Bros., the studio that Netflix and Paramount Skydance are fighting to purchase. The film establishment sent clear political messages by rallying around these two films, one an allegory about racism and cultural appropriation, and the other about rising fascism and societal division. The academy expanded the best picture field to 10 in 2022, positioning the changes as part of an expanded focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The five contenders for best actress include Jessie Buckley in "Hamnet" and Rose Byrne in "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You." The best actor race features Timothée Chalamet in "Marty Supreme," competing against Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael B. Jordan, Ethan Hawke, and Wagner Moura. The academy's focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion has led to a more diverse and diverse nominees.

La 98ª edición de los Premios de la Academia estuvo dominada por la especie más amenazada de Hollywood: películas de estudio alta-



mente originales y con grandes presupuestos. "Sinners", una fantasía de terror ambientada en la década de 1930 y arraigada en la cultura afroamericana, y "One Battle After Another", un grito desgarrador sobre el autoritarismo y la resistencia ciudadana, recibieron nominaciones en la mayoría de las categorías principales, incluyendo mejor película, director, actor, actriz de reparto, actor de reparto, fotografía y guion. Ambas películas fueron producidas por Warner Bros., el estudio que Netflix y Paramount Skydance están disputándose para adquirir. La industria cinematográfica envió claros mensajes políticos al respaldar estas dos películas, una alegoría sobre el racismo y la apropiación cultural, y la otra sobre el auge del fascismo y la división social. La Academia amplió la categoría de mejor película a diez nominadas en 2022, presentando estos cambios como parte de un mayor enfoque en la diversidad, la equidad y la inclusión.

Entre las cinco candidatas a mejor actriz se encuentran Jessie Buckley por "Hamnet" y Rose Byrne por "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You". La categoría de mejor actor cuenta con Timothée Chalamet por "Marty Supreme", compitiendo contra Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael B. Jordan, Ethan Hawke y Wagner Moura. El enfoque de la Academia en la diversidad, la equidad y la inclusión ha dado como resultado una lista de nominados más diversa y representativa.



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2026 FEBRUARY MODEL SEARCH





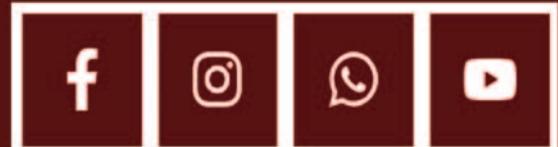
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What to Know About Michigan's Recent "Super Flu" Surge

Cases of the flu tend to up tick around the holidays and into January, but Michigan is seeing a significant surge in cases right now as this year's flu season hits harder than usual.

As of Jan. 5, 818 people were hospitalized with the flu in Michigan, according to the Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA). That's twice as many hospitalizations as this time last year. Here's what you need to know about this specific strain and safeguarding measures you can take as flu season continues.

Why is the flu so bad right now?

The current surge of flu cases is likely driven by a new strain of the flu called H3N2 Subclade K. Health experts are calling this strain the "super flu." Vulnerable populations are being hit especially hard, according to the MHA, which states that:

- Adults 75 and older make up the majority of hospitalizations
- Children ages 4 and under have the next highest hospitalization rate

The uptick in cases is putting pressure on hospitals; at the Henry Ford Health system, flu positivity rates have been above 25% for three straight weeks, peaking at 33% just before the end of December.

Vaccination rates are still low

Despite the rise in cases, vaccination rates in Michigan remain low.

Only about 2.4 million Michiganders — fewer than one in four — have received a flu shot, and fewer than one in 10 are vaccinated against COVID.

That gap is significant because vaccination remains one of the most effective measures we have to reducing hospitalizations and severe illness, especially during one of the worst flu seasons in recent years.

A quick refresher: signs, symptoms and the typical duration of flu season Influenza, or the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It infects the nose, throat and sometimes the lungs. The virus can spread easily through tiny droplets released when someone coughs, sneezes or talks. It can be transmitted when people touch contaminated surfaces — such as a keyboard or doorknob — and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

People can spread the flu about a day before symptoms appear and up to five to seven days after they start, which is why it moves so quickly through families, schools and workplaces.

Symptoms can be mild or severe and may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Extreme fatigue
- Sweating and chills
- Nausea or diarrhea (more common in children)

Flu season typically runs from October through May.



How common is the flu?

Globally, the World Health Organization estimates about 1 billion cases of seasonal influenza every year. The goal for the 2025–2026 flu season in Michigan is to vaccinate 4 million people.

Flu vaccines prevented an estimated 240,000 hospitalizations during the 2024–2025 flu season — according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) especially among adults age 65 and older.

Why getting a flu shot matters

The flu shot isn't just about avoiding a few miserable days in bed — it can be lifesaving, for you and others around you. Research indicates that getting vaccinated can:

- Reduce doctor visits by 40 to 60%
- Reduce the risk of death from flu by about 30%
- Significantly lower hospitalization risk

Getting vaccinated is especially important if you're at higher risk for complications. People in these populations include:

- Adults 65 and older
- Children under 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- People living in nursing homes or long-term care facilities

How and where to get your flu shot

There are plenty of easy ways to get vaccinated. Visiting a participating pharmacy is one way, and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan members who do so can bring their member-ID. You can also get a flu shot by:

- Scheduling an appointment with your primary care provider
- Attending a community clinic or free flu shot event
- Using vaccinefinder.org to find a location near you

Tips to stop the super flu spread

Vaccination is key, but your everyday habits can help reduce the spread of the flu, too. You can lower your risk of infection by:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Avoiding crowded or poorly ventilated spaces
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Covering coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- Keeping some distance when gathering indoors
- Using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Wearing a mask in crowded indoor public spaces

If you do get sick, the best thing you can do to protect others is stay home. Wait until your fever has been gone for at least 24 hours before returning to work, school or public places. Consider checking with your primary care provider if you are exposed to see if you are a good candidate for certain antiviral medications that can reduce the severity and duration of a flu infection if taken with 48 hours of symptom onset.

For more information about the flu, prevention tips, and vaccination resources, visit MiBlueDaily.com.



Samantha Karana



samantha.karana.2025



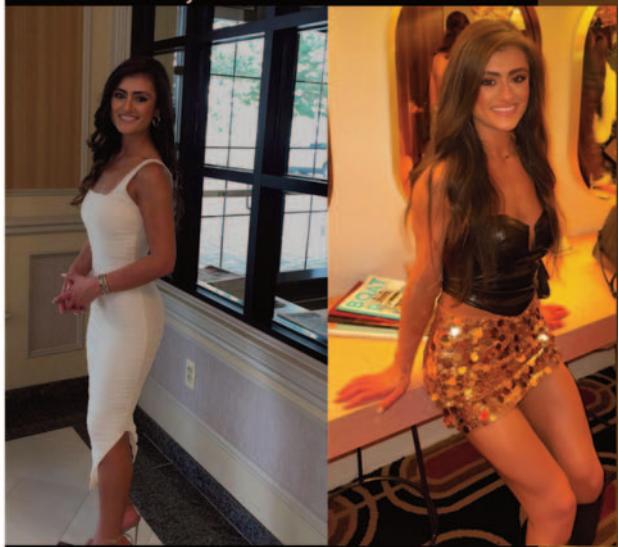
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