

Huerta promotes Hispanic empowerment

Viridiana Villa
Tejano Tribune

To conclude the 12th annual Hispanic heritage celebration Descúbrete: empowerment through Wings of Knowledge, EPCC's Diversity Program hosted the Mentor's dinner in which the college had the honor of welcoming social rights activist Dolores Huerta and recognize outstanding members of the Hispanic community.

The series of events held through the month of September were brought together by the Hispanic Heritage Committee which is part of the Diversity Program and is made by people within the college and the community.

"The mentor's dinner is important because, we want to recognize people in the community from various facets of careers that have promoted the Latino culture and image. They have contributed to

their community, and being a mentor to individuals coming their way. They have shown a significant difference in helping our culture," said Director of Diversity Program, Olga Chavez

Prior the event, Dolores Huerta offered a press conference which members of media from El Paso and Ciudad Juarez attended.

The co-founder of the National Farmworkers Association spoke to the media about the importance of the fight for the cause these days, the roles of Hispanic leaders in politics and the importance of the education in the lives of the working class children.

"There is a big push to keep our people from getting an education and kind of taking away our power that we deserve...*como latinos* we have a different set of values, we like to share.

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Dolores Huerta as keynote speaker of the mentor's dinner.

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"It's not about competition it's about helping each other around so we have a lot to contribute to this country.

"We want people to know about that, we want to continue contributing but we also want to be decision makers, we want to be in those positions, in school boards, city councils, state legislatures, positions where people are making good decisions, decisions that are for the community and not people's personal gain," said Huerta.

"Many Latino children are not getting quality education, they're not being taught of the contributions of their grandparents to build this country and they're not being taught things that they need to know to be able to go to college... we've got to fight this, it's about our community, it's about our leadership, we have to get out there and make this a civil rights issue," said Huerta.

Later on, Huerta spent time celebrating with the attendees and spoke with this year's mentors during the dinner's social hour, and after an introductory speech by local news anchor Ricardo Vela, Huerta received a lifetime achievement award and the keys of the city.

As the keynote speaker of the night, Huerta inspired the audience as she spoke about the rights of the Hispanic community and their struggles that continue up to these days.

She invited them to shout out loud "We got people power!" and "Si se puede!"

This year's honored mentors included the founder of Sin Fronteras Organizing Project and Director of Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos, Carlos Marentes, founder of FEMAP Foundation, Guadalupe Arizpe de la Vega, and a posthumous recognition was given to the family of mariachi performer Jose Luis Garcia.

When receiving his award, Marentes gave a speech that not only thanked the community for their support but invited them to appreciate the value of the work and struggle of the farmworkers to bring food to their tables, as well as the significant role of women in society.

The families of Jose Luis Garcia and Guadalupe Arizpe De la Vega accepted their awards in their behalf.

Chavez said the college was honored by having a person like Huerta at an event like this.

"A strong woman even in her age is still giving her time and effort because of something that she feels so important. She went strongly for a cause, something that she believed in, and she continues that up to this date, it's important for our youth to see somebody that they can admire and continue that effort into their own lives to strive for something they think is important to them."