



# Familias Latinas

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2022



## COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Spanish after-school program across all elementary schools
- Understanding of factors contributing to differences in academic performance of Latino/x students and students of other racial/ethnic groups (achievement gap)
- Resources and supports to address achievement gap
- Donations to support scholarship funds which are use to:
  - Support families in need
  - Make academic opportunities accessible to students (e.g., workshops or camps to learn a new skill or get exposed to a possible career path, fees for college applications)
  - Award scholarships to graduating seniors

## Familias Updates

Familias Latinas continue advocating for ways to support our children and families. The City of Albany's Social and Economic Justice Commission invited Familias Latinas along with the Asian and Pacific Islander Parent Group and the Black Parent Advocacy Group to discuss our group's goals and how the city can support us. We highlighted our accomplishments so far this school year. We also asked the City to support us in our search for space and staff to create a Spanish immersion after school program across all of our elementary schools. We also emphasized the need for donations so we can offer scholarships to help our students access resources, participate in learning opportunities, and support families in need.



This month we also announced our logo winner. Muchas gracias Flor Rios for creating our colorful and unique logo!

Join us this Sunday, December 18th from 12:30pm to 4:30pm at Ocean View Elementary for a community Potluck!



# Community Member Highlights



**Robin D. Lopez**

**City of Albany  
Council Member**

(510) 559-4581

[rdlopez@albanyca.org](mailto:rdlopez@albanyca.org)



Robin is the first ever Latinx/Mixed-Indigenous person elected to city council in Albany! Robin ran for City Council because he understands the need and power of representation. As a person of color, as a parent, and as a UC Village resident, he hopes to amplify the voices of these groups and to advocate for beneficial and effective policies for all in Albany. Robin's ambitious goals include promoting youth empowerment and civic engagement, preserving the ecological integrity of our green spaces, encouraging transparency around public safety, and advocating for fair, equitable housing.

Robin acknowledges that his ancestors did not have the same opportunities as him. He recalls that his parents worked long hours during his childhood to try to meet all of their family's needs. This is a common story in our community. When our families are focusing on surviving, it is hard to focus on much else. However, Robin has learned how powerful education can be for our community. He has obtained a BS in Civil Engineering from San Francisco State University and an MS in Water Resource Engineering from San Jose State University. He is currently working towards his doctorate in Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at UC Berkeley. Robin believes in the importance of bringing institutional knowledge back to his community and using it towards catalyzing change.

Robin joined Familias Latinas because having a sense of community is integral for our mental, emotional, and spiritual health. As parent of a 12-year-old at Albany Middle school and an 11-week-old, Robin also values being around other parents with shared experiences. Robin is a third generation Latino and wants his children to be exposed to the Latino community and proud of their roots. We are so grateful to have Robin in our group and hope that his accomplishments inspire the youth in our community. He welcomes the community to reach out to him with any questions or concerns.



# Community Member Highlights



## **Candelaria Gherardi Arbizu y Guido Llauro**

Welcome Candelaria and Guido! They came to Albany from Argentina this past year with their daughter Emiliana. Emiliana is in TK at Ocean View and is enjoying making new friends. Candelaria is a doctor and nurse anesthetist; she received her medical training and license in Argentina. She is currently visiting her brother in Albany while she is on sabbatical and preparing to take the medical licensing exam to practice medicine in the United States and Canada. Guido is a manager for a cyber security company in Argentina. In addition, he is studying to become a web developer. When they're not working, they are known to make delicious Argentinian pizzas!

Although they are new to Albany, Candelaria and Guido did not hesitate to lend a helping hand. They helped decorate Albany Middle School for AUSD's Celebracion Latina in October. Candelaria has also offered to help families understand medical information provided by their doctors.

Candelaria and Guido were excited to learn about Familias Latinas because they value and love their Latin culture. They hope to find a sense of community in this group while they work on their career goals. They also know that the support and wisdom of fellow Familias Latinas members will be invaluable as they adjust to their new life in the US. Please join me in welcoming them to our family!

*To continue to get to know each other and to highlight the accomplishments within our community, we will feature members of our community each month. Perhaps you want to show your child how proud you are of all their effort and accomplishments. Perhaps you want to introduce yourself so you can connect with our community. Perhaps you have a business, service, or skill that you can offer our community. Please email Familias Latinas de Albany to nominate someone to be featured in our monthly newsletter.*



# Holiday Traditions

*While many of us are familiar with the many traditional practices associated with Christmas, such as decorating a tree, baking holiday cookies, and giving presents, many of us are unaware of how other cultures celebrate the holidays. We at Familias Latinas de Albany strive to inspire community, which is why we thought sharing holiday traditions from different Hispanic countries would be a great way for us to come together in the spirit of the season.*

## “Angelitos”

### Punta Cana, Dominican Republic



In the Dominican Republic, the holiday season marks the beginning of "Angelitos," a weekly tradition of gift-giving among family, friends, and colleagues. Initially, the names of each participant are 'raffled' inside a bag. As a result, it becomes a great secret who gives to whom. In most cases, a budget is agreed upon, such as no more than 50 pesos per week, but every now and then, a 'little devil' will give away rocks, dead bugs, or other things because they forgot to buy something. The real fun lies in figuring out exactly who your 'Angelito' is without giving too much information. Some people will try to give false clues about their true 'angel' status. On the last day of giving presents, people generally give "nicer" gifts and reveal their true identities. Of course, everyone gets together for a celebration!



## "The North Pole"

### Santiago, Chile



Every Christmas, the post office in Santiago acts as "the North Pole" and asks every child in the country to please write a Christmas list. The post office picks letters from some of the most disadvantaged kids (the ones who ask for a bed or for shoes, etc.) and sends them that item from "Santa." The remaining Christmas lists are spread out on tables in a backroom of the post office marked "adults only," so regular citizens can come in and purchase a smaller item they want to gift to a letter-writer.

Also, because it's summer, the 25th is unofficially dubbed "beach day." Everyone spends the day at one of the many beaches on the coast of Chile. We celebrate Christmas on the 24th, which is Noche Buena, and the 25th is celebrated as beach and BBQ Day!



# Holiday Traditions

## “Las patinatas”

### Caracas, Venezuela



In Venezuela, most people use public transportation to go to church during the holidays. Caracas citizens, however, do things a bit differently by skating, bicycling, or scootering to Christmas mass, a tradition that began in the early 50s. It is said that children go to sleep with a piece of string tied around their toe and the other end hanging out of the window. When skaters roll past, they tug on the string, signaling children it is time to put their skates on and roll their way to Christmas mass.



## "Tamales Colorados"

### Guatemala



In Guatemala, the majority of Christmas activities are celebrated on Christmas Eve (Noche Buena). That evening families gather to have a traditional holiday meal and spend time together. Tamales colorados are made most commonly from corn-based masa, though some make them with a rice-based masa. The tamale fillings reflect a mix of the indigenous culinary tradition of meat cooked in a seed and chile-based sauce alongside ingredients from Europe including capers, raisins, prunes, and smoked bell peppers. This is all bundled up in banana leaves before steaming. Alongside the tamales, Ponche de fruta is served, a warm fruit punch that fills homes with the inviting aromas of cinnamon and various juices and fruit chunks. With traditional Christmas pine trees being rare in many parts of Guatemala (e.g., tropical rainforest areas), tree branches are often spray-painted silver and decorated. At the stroke of midnight, Christmas hugs are exchanged and gifts are opened! Very young kids go to bed before midnight, but the excitement of presents keeps those 2 and over awake and asking every two minutes how much time is remaining until midnight.



# Community Events

## **FREE HOLIDAY MOVIE MATINEE: ELF**

Enjoy a free viewing of Elf.

Saturday, December 17th 11am - 1pm  
Rialto Cinemas Elmwood  
2966 College Ave Berkeley



## **HOLIDAY BINGO FOR KIDS**

Kids of all ages can play bingo holiday-style in the meeting room at North Branch. Each bingo round has a chance to win a small prize

December 19, 2022. 3:00pm-4:00pm  
North Branch Berkeley Library

## **CHRISTMAS TREE LANE, ALAMEDA**

The best-lit neighborhood in the Bay is in Alameda, on the 3200 block of Thompson Ave. Every year, the street puts on a dazzling display that plugs directly into the spirit of the season. Affectionately known as Christmas Tree Lane, this has been an annual tradition since 1938.

December 4th - December 31st  
3200-3299 Thompson Ave Alameda



## **HOLIDAY FANTASY PARADE**

Roll past cheery, costumed characters sparkling with LEDs! You'll see the snow queen on stilts, reindeer, a huge arctic fox, Christmas trees, The Grinch, Santa's Elves plus many more! The holiday lights will be twinkling on.

Saturday, December 17th 5:30-7:30pm  
Fourth St. and Delaware in Berkeley



## **GLOWFARI AT OAKLAND ZOO**

Walk through a mile-long journey and be dazzled by hundreds of larger-than-life animals lit up by lanterns in this unforgettable holiday lights display! Ride the gondola to the Land of Bugs, hop on the Express Train through Winter Wonderland and finish the evening with a visit to Santa!

December 13-23, 26-31, 2022  
January 1-8, 11-15, 18-22, 25-29, 2023

Make sure to visit Santa in the Rides Area every night December 1-23 from 6:00pm to 9:30pm (line closes at 9:15pm).

Oakland Zoo  
9777 Golf Links Road Oakland



# Community Resources

## SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOURCES

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Albany Disability Squad: Parent organization that advocates for the needs of students with disabilities. If your child is struggling in school and you are wondering if and how they can get more support, this group can help you understand what is available in AUSD and link you to community resources.

Albany's Pride: LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Group for AUSD

AUSD Student Services: responsible for student attendance, discipline, mental health, and interventions to support students' social-emotional needs. For support please email the Director of Students Services Deb Brill at [dbrill@ausdk12.org](mailto:dbrill@ausdk12.org)

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Family Paths: parenting stress and mental health support

ACCESS is a multilingual, culturally responsive call center that provides information, screening, and referrals for mental health and substance use disorder treatment for Alameda County residents.

24 hours a day/7 days a week  
1-800-491-9099

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) East Bay: Provides resources for Alameda & Contra Costa County

## WORKSHOPS

Atención Los Empresarios Hispanos / Attention Hispanic Business Owners

Every year, millions of dollars are awarded to small business owners just like you. However, almost all scholarship applications require responses to be submitted in English. Through this free program, we offer grant application assistance to establish, support, and grow your small business.

Tuesdays and Fridays 1:30-4:30  
until 12/30th

2090 Kittredge St. (at Shattuck)  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
510-981-6100

## FOOD PANTRIES AND SERVICES

Alameda County Social Services

Alameda County Community Food Bank

Berkeley Food Pantry

Berkeley Food Network

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

Food Pantries

Is there a community resource you would like to share with others? Are there latinx businesses you want to recommend? Do you own a business that you want our community to know about?  
If so, please email us.

