



Dave Heineman
Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA

Latino American Commission
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NUESTRA NEBRASKA, MY NEBRASKA CULTURAL EXHIBIT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

SCOTTSBLUFF – The Nebraska Latino American Commission (NLAC) invited the youth of Nebraska to participate in the Commission’s first statewide youth photography exhibit in more than 10 years.

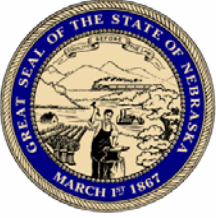
The exhibit, sponsored by Rockbrook Camera and ConAgra, titled, *Nuestra Nebraska, My Nebraska* was open to students of all backgrounds and ethnicities attending a school in Nebraska. NLAC requested submissions from students and families that showed Latinos in Nebraska in everyday life as family, friends, neighbors, students, athletes, teachers and members of the community. The purpose was to showcase a statewide exhibit promoting Latinos while giving students an opportunity to display their work in a museum.

Three Latina students received top honors after their entries were judged by NLAC staff, UNL Art Professor Francisco Souto and Lincoln Journal Star Photo Editor Ted Kirk. All submitted photos were judged on quality and how well the images correlated with the theme of representing Nebraska Latinos in everyday life. The top places included Grand Prize, First Place, Second Place and Third Place. There are a total of 10 photos in the exhibit including the top four place winners and six of the remaining best photos.

Grand Prize winner Natalia Ceballos, 18, took her winning photo of her father, Rodolfo Ceballos, sister, Jazmin Ceballos, and mother, Maria Ramirez, on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012. A second photo Natalia submitted is also included in the exhibit.

“My sister had just found Easter eggs by herself. She was really happy so she came over to where we were all sitting down on the grass and hugged my parents,” said Natalia. “The images represent Latinos in Nebraska because we celebrate the same holidays the same way, like having egg hunts on Easter. It represents Latinos well because it clarifies some of the misguided ideas that Latinos must do everything differently because we are of a different race.”

Natalia is a senior at Benson High School in Omaha. Her family is originally from Michoacán, Mexico and moved to Omaha in 1993. She learned of the contest through her bilingual liaison, Mrs. Hofsommer.



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“I have been in several photography classes. I am currently taking Art 6, Studio Art and Pottery 4. My goal is to attend either the University of Nebraska at Omaha or the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. I am still not sure if I am going to major in art or if it is just going to be my minor,” she said.

Karen Puentes de la Luna is a student at Southeast Community College in Lincoln. All three photos Luna submitted are in the exhibit, with two winning top honors in first and second place.

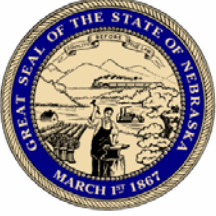
Her first place photo shows her little brother playing with her baby nephew.

“I took my baby nephew out to take some pictures of him in the grass when my little brother came in and started playing with him. In my eyes there is nothing that makes me happier than seeing these two little boys laughing and playing,” said Luna, whose second place photo was taken on August 25, 2012, featuring her sister, Jessica, on her fifteenth birthday proudly wearing her Quinceañera gown.

“I took this picture for two main reasons; the first was because she looked absolutely stunning in her dress and the second because more than anything she was beyond happy to have a limo. I was more than excited when she asked me to plan her Quinceañera and I put in my all to make it as perfect as I could. And for those of you who don’t know what a Quinceañera is, it’s when a girl from Latin American society transcends into a woman. It’s our tradition to have a church ceremony and have parties letting the public know that our daughters, sisters, granddaughters, and cousins have come of age.”

Dayana Rodriguez, a student attending the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK) and President of the Lambda Theta Nu sorority chapter at UNK, won third place for her photo taken in September 2011 of her sorority sisters picking up litter at the highway they adopted.

“I took this picture because it shows the ladies of Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc., a Latina-based sorority, working towards a better community,” said Rodriguez. “To me, this depicts an accurate image of Latinos in Nebraska. When people are driving on the highway and see individuals picking up trash on the side of the road, a stereotype may arise on what kind of people they are. Although, some may think those individuals are obliged to do community service because they have gotten into trouble, those individuals might actually be my sorority sisters serving the community because they desire to do so.”



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The goal of the NLAC exhibit can be summed up with an observation by Ceballos: “I am honored that my photos were selected because when I took these I was not really thinking that anyone outside my family would get to see them or even less likely that they would be displayed.”

The exhibit will be displayed at Carnegie Arts Center in Alliance from August 19 to Sept. 29, 2013.

The Nebraska Latino-American Commission is an independent state agency serving as a voice between the Nebraska state government and Latino-American community. Our Vision is to empower the Latino American community through education, social, political, and economic opportunities in Nebraska.

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Note: Photo Available.