

2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for

EDUCATION

Sponsored by Southwest Airlines



EUTIQUIO CHAPA

Eutiquio Chapa is keenly aware of the negative stereotypes of Mexican Americans and believes that too many Latinos reinforce that notion by joining gangs or not applying themselves in school. He understands that there is a tremendous amount of injustice and oppression, but firmly believes in the adage, "it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

A second-generation Mexican American from King City, CA, Eutiquio made the difficult decision to change schools after his sophomore year. Although he endured criticism from his peers by moving from his hometown high school to a private school in Salinas, he knew that the new school would challenge him academically and offer more opportunities for success. He quickly became one of the top students at Palma High School, was named a National Hispanic Scholar, and was selected to participate in an academic program at M.I.T. over the summer of 2005.

Eutiquio graduated high school with a 4.4 GPA, and will attend Stanford University in the fall. He says he is intrigued by the human mind and looks forward to helping research teaching methods that stimulate and accelerate the learning process. His goal is to develop a program that would be implemented in elementary schools, specifically those comprised predominantly of children from lower-income families with a large percentage of ESL students. Eutiquio believes he can effectively train faculty and administrators by providing them with the knowledge and tools necessary to create a learning environment that provides students with the support, motivation, resources, and role models they need to reach their full potential.

Eutiquio believes in the power of education, and is firmly committed to providing opportunities for those less fortunate.

**2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for
Community Service
Sponsored by Dr Pepper**



MARINA ALANNA GATTO

Marina Gatto knows a lot about discrimination. Growing up not only Latina but with two lesbian mothers, she remembers the sting of her home being vandalized and frightening threats against the lives of her family. At the age of nine, Marina began speaking publicly to educate people about the diversity and acceptance, and to help create political and social change. She has appeared in newspapers and on television, and has spoken at conferences, schools and universities. Last year she was selected as one of *Cosmogirl Magazine's* "Top Ten Born to Lead," and was named one of "San Mateo County's Young Women of Excellence," and inducted into the county's Hall of Fame. She also received the national "RESPECT" Award from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

A second generation American of Salvadoran descent, Marina remembers her grandmother's stories about the discrimination her mother had faced as a child, when they were the only Latino family living in a predominantly white area. This too was part of the impetus for Marina to work tirelessly to educate audiences about diversity, and the contributions that diverse groups can bring to American society.

From her home in San Carlos, CA, Marina is committed to making significant policy changes throughout the state. She was instrumental in passing two California assembly bills, including a Domestic Rights and Responsibilities Act, which passed by only one vote, and affects over 100,000 families in the state including her own.

Marina is a leader in the Latino and LGBT communities. After graduating from Mercy High School with a 3.6 GPA, she will attend the University of California Berkeley and study law. One day she hopes to become a politician, carrying with her the richness of her Latino heritage and the experiences that have helped shape her into being an advocate for people of many diverse backgrounds.

**2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for
Engineering & Mathematics
Sponsored by ExxonMobil**



ELETHA JOY FLORES

If you ask Eletha Joy Flores about her future, make sure you bring along a dictionary.

Of Mexican descent, Eletha lives in Springdale, MD, and graduated from Charles Herbert Flowers High School with a 4.4 GPA. She will attend M.I.T. in the fall and after completing her degree in Electrical Engineering to the Doctoral level, Eletha wants to conduct research in nanotechnology and automation for robots. As an intern on a research and development team at NASA, she has been surrounded by revolutionary ideas about the future of space robotics, as the team works to create a reconfigurable and artificially intelligent land explorer out of nanotubes.

Eletha plans to begin her career at NASA as an engineer in research and development. Later she wants to join forces with academia or private industry to push the envelope and create more efficient solar cells. Finally she wants to lead the effort to make molecular nanotechnology a part of industrial America – advancing technology for the benefit of society. Eletha is well on her way to becoming one of our country's finest engineers, and the coordinator of her school's Science and Technology Program says that she will no doubt make significant contributions to the future of science, mathematics and engineering. Throughout her years at her school's Science and Technology Program, Eletha has participated in several engineering team competitions. Her team won the top prize in the 2004 and 2005 Raytheon Engineer's Week Multimedia Contest for Biometrics and Avionics respectively. She led her school's first place standing in the 2005 Maryland State Robot Challenge, and received recognition for best documentation of the engineer's design process.

Eletha is very proud of her rich heritage and, in high school, delivered speeches to her student body, comprised of over 90% minority students, about taking advantage of opportunities and raising the bar of achievement. She hopes that ne day she will be able to do something about the under-representation of women and minorities in engineering.

2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for

Healthcare

Sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline



RAYDEN LLANO

At a young age, Rayden Llano has already made a difference in the world of healthcare. As a volunteer at the Coulter Platelet Laboratory at the University of Miami for the past two years, he has dedicated over 800 hours of community service to conduct research on a hematological disorder called Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP) – a potentially fatal disease in which the immune system destroys its own platelets and contribute to internal bleeding. Rayden is already committed to pursuing advances in ITP research.

As a Cuban American, obtaining a volunteer position to conduct graduate level medical research was a huge milestone for Rayden. But his biggest surprise was that the place where remarkable scientific discoveries were being made was also the place where he could further cultivate an appreciation for his Hispanic heritage. To Rayden's initial surprise, his lab mentors were predominantly Cuban and would frequently discuss complex medical research in Spanish. His ability to relate to his mentors on both an intellectual and cultural level makes his lab time much more enjoyable. In his words, "it is quite fulfilling to talk to my mentors about my passion for Cuban history and salsa music while actively working toward medical advances."

From Princeton, FL, Rayden graduated from Coral Gables Senior High School with a perfect 4.0 GPA, and plans to attend Stanford University in the fall where he looks forward to learning more about his two greatest passions – medical research and the Hispanic culture.

2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for

Journalism

Sponsored by NBC Universal/Telemundo



FERNANDO SALVADOR SANCHEZ

When Fernando Sanchez was in the seventh grade, he contracted a disease known as Transverse Myelitis (TM), a condition of the spinal cord. As a result, he has limited use of his legs and relies on a walker. His greatest challenge was learning to deal with his new “physical self,” but he overcame this challenge through the support of a diverse group of students from all over the world who studied with him at the United Nations International School in New York City.

For the past two years, Fernando was production editor for UNISVerse, his high school newspaper. In this role, he was responsible for the entire layout of the paper as well as verification of all articles and photographs. He also wrote several articles for the paper. In addition to his background in journalism, he served two years on his school’s student council, worked as a teaching assistant in his school’s ESL program, worked with his school’s media lab, and raised money for Project Restore, a research program of Johns Hopkins University to study spinal cord injuries. During this time he maintained a 4.4 GPA.

Of Mexican descent, Fernando will attend Princeton University in the fall, where he wants to study mathematics and journalism. He continues to be very interested in the production side of both print and broadcast media.

Fernando’s greatest role model is Thierry Henry, who plays soccer for the national team of France, as well as the soccer club Arsenal. Fernando admires this African athlete because he has been a leading spokesperson against racial discrimination. Fernando firmly believes that discrimination of any sort is the single greatest challenge to a country’s progress and hopes that his life will be an example to others that people who are physically challenged can become recognized leaders and excel in anything they put their minds to.

**2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for
Leadership
Sponsored by Kellogg Company**



ERIC HAMILTON SANARIA

Eric Hamilton Sanaria is a first generation American of Salvadoran descent. Growing up in the gang-ravaged and impoverished community of South Central Los Angeles, his pursuit of higher education has been filled with obstacles. Most youngsters from his community did not even finish high school much less pursue a college degree. But Eric was determined to succeed through hard work, determination and leadership.

Drawing motivation from his parents, Eric looked beyond his surroundings and focused on education and community service. During the 2004 Presidential election, he launched a political forum in his community to help educate people about how they can make a difference. He organized his school's first mock presidential election and political awareness month and led a student-teacher panel on candidate's positions on urban issues. During this time, the community trauma center in the King/Drew Hospital was being subject to closure, and many students challenged the controversial decision of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to close the vital facility. Eric led the delegation in a public hearing and several prominent leaders, such as Jesse Jackson and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, applauded Eric's steadfast commitment to activism.

While working tirelessly as a community leader, Eric was also student body vice president at his high school, King/Drew Magnet High School of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles. He was also president of a tutoring program that mentors "at-risk" low scoring third graders.

With a 4.3 GPA, Eric graduated first in his class, and will attend Dartmouth College in the fall where he plans to major in Government and Philosophy and eventually pursue a career in public service and policy. He will be the first in his family to attend college.

2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for
Sports
Sponsored by Subway



LUIS FLORES

Luis Flores is tired of hearing, "You're Mexican? You're too smart to be a Mexican!" Raised in a home in Chandler, AZ, where racial and ethnic acceptance was always emphasized, he simply could not believe what he was hearing. Through remarks like this, Luis learned how negative stereotypes are ingrained into the community and how unaware some people can be about the level of prejudice that affects people of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Luis is committed to shattering these stereotypes. Whether it be running five kilometers over rough terrain in 120-degree heat, subsequently winning wrestling matches, practicing high hurdles for days on end, preparing for International Percussion and Language competitions, or tutoring other students in physics, math, or chemistry, Luis has excelled in everything he sets his mind to do. He says with pride, "I do what I love, and love what I do, aiming to find myself and show through my accomplishments that my origins are in no way detrimental to my every goal but rather my great source of inspiration."

Luis is an excellent wrestler, but he will tell you that it's not about the medals or trophies. For Luis, it is the test of will, determination and building of character which have served to put him on a path to success. He will attend M.I.T in the fall and pursue a degree combining physics, medicine, nutrition, and math.

In addition to being a star athlete, Luis is a remarkable student having maintained a 4.0 GPA at Corona Del Sol High School in Chandler. He won first place in Arizona on the highest level of the National Spanish Examination and has been awarded the title of National Hispanic Recognition Scholar. Luis also shows his motivational qualities with the speech and debate club. These qualities were exhibited when he was a child, developing his bilingual skills at the age of two in his hometown of Irapuato, Mexico, where he was always eager to speak and write coherently in both Spanish and English.

**2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for
Academic Excellence**
Sponsored by Chase and MasterCard International



DAVID TOMAS ESCAMILLA

As a proud Mexican American committed to academics, David Escamilla will remind you that the first university in the Americas was actually established in Mexico City in 1551.

An honors student and valedictorian of Jesuit College Preparatory School in Dallas, TX, David firmly believes that anything can be accomplished through hard work and determination. Inspired by great Hispanic intellectuals such as Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz, a Costa Rican who has flown five space shuttle missions and heads the Advanced Propulsion Laboratory at the Johnson Space Center, David focuses on developing his academic skills to positively impact society. He is the recipient of 11 academic and service awards and was captain of his school's varsity swim team.

David believes that part of success is giving back to his community, and has spent over 700 hours performing community service, such as tutoring Hispanic pre-school students and launching the Dallas Region of the National Hispanic Institute as a way to develop future leaders.

In the fall, David will attend Harvard University and then pursue a career in public service and Latino community advocacy. Ultimately he wants to make a sustainable impact by developing leaders, helping alleviate poverty, or increasing opportunities for education.

2006 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award Recipient for
Arts & Culture
Sponsored by Smithsonian Latino Center



OLIVIA ALVAREZ

Of Puerto Rican and Cuban descent, Olivia Alvarez says that “dance is joy.” After 14 years of studying ballet, jazz, tap, lyrical, pointe, and modern dance, she still enjoys the challenge of improving her technique and performance abilities. She says that being on stage gives her comfort and strength, and she works through dance to motivate and inspire others.

Olivia graduated from St. John Vianney High School in Holmdel, NJ, with a 4.1 GPA. Throughout high school, she taught classes for younger dancers and tutored other students in a variety of subjects. She was a New Jersey Governor’s School of the Arts Scholar, a member of the National Honor Society, and the recipient of the Frances L. Chalif Scholarship for dance.

Olivia will attend Point Park University in Pittsburgh, an advanced dance curriculum to which only one out of 10 candidates is accepted from more than 600 dancers who apply each year. Ultimately she is interested in combining her interest in dance with psychology or dance therapy. There is no doubt Olivia will continue to pursue her passion of dance, inspiring others through her talent and commitment to excellence.