



Welcome

to the 12th Annual Forum on the Latino Community

*Bridging the Gap Between
Immigration Policy and
Its Relationship to our Communities*

September 9, 2026

Event Program

8:00

Registration & Coffee – Rose Garden & Ballroom

*Buffet breakfast opens – Ballroom
Catered by Mezcalito Oaxacan Cuisine*

Welcoming Remarks & Year in Review

Elisa Herrera, Executive Director

“Heart & Soul” Messages of Love

Board Members Santiago García Martín and Renee Regacho-Anaclerio

Sponsor Recognition & LLC’s 2025 Community Impact

*Board Member Syrina Vasquez and
LLC Program Analyst Crystal Lopez-Franco*

10:15-10:45

NETWORKING/ RAFFLE / BREAK – Rose Garden

Keynote Address

*“Immigration Challenges and Opportunities:
Rationally Addressing the Movement of People Across Borders”
Dean Kevin Johnson*

Dr. Reyes Ortega 26-27 Scholarship Presentation

Board Member Dr. Reyes Ortega

Quetzal Awards

*Board Members Santiago García Martín, Dr. Reyes Ortega,
Brian Passenheim*

12:15

Closing & Raffle Announcement

RAFFLE & SILENT AUCTION WINNERS POSTED IN ROSE GARDEN

Our Board of Directors



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Rachel Guerrero, LCSW | Ret'd, CA Office of Multicultural Health

Reyes Ortega, Ph.D. | Professor Emeritus, Sierra College

Brian Passenheim | Chief, Placer County Probation

Renee Regacho-Anaclerio, Ed.D. | Trustee, PCOE / Ret'd Asst. Supt. PCOE



Elisa Herrera
Founding Executive Director

Keynote Speaker

Kevin R. Johnson

Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus,
Director of the Aoki Center, and
Professor Emeritus of Chicana/o Studies



Kevin R. Johnson is a Distinguished Professor of Law and Chicanx Studies Emeritus and Director of the Aoki Center. He is the former Mabie/Apallas Professor of Public Interest Law and had a faculty appointment in the Department of Chicana/o Studies at UC Davis. He joined the UC Davis law faculty in 1989 and was named Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

in 1998. Johnson then served as Dean from 2008 to 2024, the longest term in UC Davis School of Law history. He has taught a wide array of classes, including immigration law, civil procedure, complex litigation, Latinos and Latinas and the law, and Critical Race Theory. In 1993, he was the recipient of the law school's Distinguished Teaching Award.

Johnson has published extensively on immigration law and civil rights. He was one of the "10 Most-Cited Immigration Law Faculty in the U.S., 2016-2020" according to Brian Leiter's Law School Reports. Published in 1999, his book *How Did You Get to Be Mexican? A White/Brown Man's Search for Identity* was nominated for the 2000 Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. Johnson's book, *Immigration Law and the US-Mexico Border* (2011), received the Latino Literacy Now's International Latino Book Awards – Best Reference Book. Johnson blogs regularly on immigration law and policy developments at ImmigrationProf.com. In the 2025/26 academic year, he will publish the third edition of *Immigration and Social Justice* and the fourth edition of *Understanding Immigration Law*.

Keynote Speaker

A magna cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School, where he served as an editor of the Harvard Law Review, Johnson earned an A.B. in economics from UC Berkeley, graduating Phi Beta Kappa. After law school, he clerked for the Honorable Stephen Reinhardt of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and worked as an attorney at the international law firm of Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe. Johnson served from 1996 to 2022 on the board of directors of Legal Services of Northern California, including more than ten years as President of the board. From 2006 to 2011, he served on the board of directors of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the leading Mexican-American civil rights organization in the United States.

Johnson is the recipient of many awards and honors including Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Stewart Center, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, spring 2025; Award from the Chicana Latin Alumni Association for Service to the University of California and the Latino Community (2024); and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation Outstanding Achievement in Law and Policy Award (2024); California Law Pathways 2024 Diversity Champion Award; and Mexican American Bar Foundation Award (2024). Johnson has been an American Bar Foundation Fellow since 2016. In 2003, he was elected to the American Law Institute.

The Quetzal Awards



Art Credit: MangyCoyote.tumblr.com

The Latino Leadership Council's Quetzal Awards are named for the elusive and beautiful Quetzal, which makes its home in Mexico and Central America and is the national bird of Guatemala. Although the Quetzal's colors are vibrant, the Quetzal is often camouflaged among the vegetation of its habitat.

We chose the Quetzal as our award namesake because like the bird, our Quetzal award winners are individuals and organizations that are often hidden as they work in the Latino communities, yet their love and joy of service to others shines brightly. Like the Quetzal's long, intertwining tail feathers, our Quetzal Award winners work in close collaboration with others to ensure that the Latino community is appropriately served.

Past Honorees

Health Care Award Recipients

2025 – Imelda Valdez
2024 – Laura Logan
2023 – María Ramirez,
2022 – Gladys Puente
2019 – Prep Médico
2018 – Gilberto Riojas
2017 – Gina Martínez-Díaz
2016 – Ana Liz Servín-Bancroft
2015 – Melody Quenzer, D.O.
2014 – Chapa De Indian Health

Education Award Recipients

2025 – Western Placer USD Liaisons
2024 – Elvira Covarrubias Martínez
2023 – Dr. Melissa Moreno, Ph.D. &
Christine Mabery
2022 – Michelle Hill
2019 – Marcelina Zamora
2018 – Sandra Guzmán

2017 – Elizabeth Balmin
2016 – Antonieta Márquez
2015 – María Córdova
2014 – Rock Creek Elementary School

Youth Development Award Recipients

2025 – Dennis Duran
2024 – Alma Elizabeth López
2023 – Mayra Plascencia
2022 – Pablo Bermudez
2019 – Placer Sheriff's Activities League (PSAL)
2018 – Sac PD Officer Lilia Vásquez
2017 – Indira Infante
2016 – Dan Beltrán
2015 – Placer County Children's System of Care
2014 – Youth Empowerment and Goals Association
(YEAGA)

Quetzal Awards Honorees

Health Care Award Honoree

Maribel Hernández, Community Education Specialist, UC Davis MIND Institute

Maribel is a parent to two adult sons with autism and she harnesses her own lived experience to help families find resources as a family navigator. She is an exceptional leader who has had profound impact on the lives of people with neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDD) and their families. She has spearheaded countless community programs, partnered with community members and professionals to develop long-lasting educational materials for the public to educate people about NDDs, and she founded and continues to lead an annual Spanish-language conference for families caring for a loved with NDDs. She is the Founder of Aprendiendo Juntos, a yearly conference about autism and developmental disabilities. She is also the lead of Colaboración Latina CA, a statewide networking organization that includes professionals serving people with disabilities who are Spanish speaking. She is the founder of Padres para Padres-CEDD, a family support group for those caring for loved ones with NDDs. Maribel has either solely initiated these programs and developed them from the ground up with our partners or collaborated exceptionally well with our colleagues to develop the large number of touchpoints we now have with Spanish speaking and Latino/a people in our community and beyond. Her prioritization of Latino/a and Spanish communities and advocacy of the community needs is always at the forefront of her work, and she is truly a gift to all of us.

Education Award Honorees

Andrea Fernández Landa, IDEA Analyst, Town of Truckee

Andrea has been instrumental in the creation of the Town of Truckee's first Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Action Plan, working tirelessly in a difficult environment and advocating for the LatinX community in a new job that she is building herself. A lot of what Andrea does is behind-the-scenes work with both colleagues and community members, navigating difficult conversations to get staff and policy to reflect (IDEA) practices and policies with language, approach, and input. She brings the culture of valuing all people, empowering individuals, holding mutual respect and cultural humility. Beyond translation of government documents and outreach materials to increase language access, Andrea's rapport and relationship building actually gets monolingual Spanish speaking residents to show up and participate.

Andrea has faced criticism and discrimination in a white male-dominated field and in the community at-large and though social media is constant in mocking this work, Andrea persists with grace and quiet determination. Andrea was also formally a TTUSD middle school Wellness Program Specialist, helping youth access resources, build self-esteem and have hope for the future. She works courageously to welcome, empower, and include oppressed members of the community in the midst of a climate of fear and bullying and for that, she is worthy of the Quetzal Award.

Quetzal Awards Honorees

Kevin Hernandez, Marketing Director, Denio's Farmers Market & Swap Meet

Kevin is a passionate community leader whose lifelong commitment to service has made a lasting impact throughout the Latino community. Through his professional career, nonprofit leadership, and volunteer service, he has consistently used his voice, skills, and platform to uplift others, connect people with valuable resources, and create opportunities that strengthen families and neighborhoods. Kevin is Director of Marketing for Denio's, helping to expand community outreach by promoting local small businesses, many of which are Latino-owned, while creating family-friendly events that celebrate culture, entrepreneurship, and community connection. His efforts have brought increased visibility to local vendors and strengthened relationships between businesses and the communities they serve.

Kevin also serves as a freelance reporter for Good Day Sacramento, intentionally using his platform to tell stories that often go untold, giving recognition to organizations and individuals making a positive difference in the community and connecting residents with important resources while celebrating the diversity and resilience of the region. He embodies the spirit of the Quetzal Award because his work bridges cultures, empowers nonprofits, supports local businesses, and inspires civic engagement. He is not only a leader but also a trusted advocate whose influence continues to create meaningful, lasting change throughout the region.

Youth Development Award Honoree

Blanca Hurtado, Client Services Practitioner, Placer County Children's System of Care (CSOC)

Blanca has served youth and families as a mental health clinician/facilitator within Placer County Wraparound and with the Juvenile and Family Treatment Court (JFTC) program, and supporting youth with a comprehensive counseling program that focuses on alcohol and other substance use problems. As a Wrap facilitator, Blanca was conscientious and sensitive to Latino/a populations who struggled with language or literacy challenges by ensuring the use of pictograms to support with plans. With JFTC, she partners with the Juvenile Probation Officer, treatment team, and presents youths progress, strengths, and challenges during monthly collaborative court proceedings, always practicing client-centered care via a trauma-informed lens. During groups and assigned journaling that serve as an interactive counseling exchange, she is insightful and advocates for youth needs as it pertains to cognitive level, learning difficulties, as well as linguistic needs.

By suspending judgment and practicing empathy, she aids each youth's learning styles by meeting with them individually, reading to them aloud in private, and/or to allow for increased comprehension. She serves as a role model, not only in her position as a mental health clinician, but also as a respected military veteran of our country. She finds greatness and advocates for Latino/a youth who have historically been negatively labeled by society, helping to empower them by growing their self-confidence, working with their families to understand their challenges, and being a consistent adult in their lives. Blanca is someone who is passionate in supporting her community. This isn't something that can be taught, but a value that is engrained, and for this, she is more than worthy of the Quetzal Award.

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