

Hispanic Heritage Month – Interviews

Hola amigos! As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, our Spanish II students & teachers at CGUHS are interviewing some of our staff and district members. Please get to know our first interviewee.



V. Reneé Morales.
Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the district.

1. What is your name and your job at our school?

V. Renee Morales. I am the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the district.

2. Do you have Hispanic heritage? Please tell us a little bit about your heritage.

I am a Mexican American, born in Tucson, Arizona. On my dad's side, I am a second generation American. On my mom's side, it's a little more complicated. My grandmother was born on a ranch in what is now Marana (Rillito), Arizona. Her father, Pa Mon (Ramon Gracia) owned many parcels of land at the time, and at that time it was Mexico. When the area became a territory through the Gadsden Purchase, my nana (Mary Bermudez) was born an American citizen. So essentially, my family, on my mother's side, has always been from Arizona- even when it was Mexico.

3. If you don't have Hispanic heritage, how have you embraced the Hispanic culture in your life? Do you speak the language? Have you lived in a Spanish Speaking country?

My dad was blonde (a guero Mexican) and my mother went to Catholic school. Both struggled because they spoke Spanish as a first language. As a result, they made the decision to teach my sisters and I English and English only as the primary language. I learned basic words, but only responded in English. I did take Spanish in high school and a little more in college, I have receptive language but my expressive abilities in Spanish are weak.

4. Why is it important to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month?

I think being proud of our Hispanic heritage is very important. I grew up in a predominantly white community, but I was raised rich in my culture. I love our traditions and heritage. Sharing it, and celebrating it is an important thing for me.

5. Please name a few Hispanic traditions that you and your family engage in (food, dances, music, language, celebrations, etc.).

I come from a very musical family. Several of my family members are professional mariachis. Food is love and I love to cook, especially food from our culture. One day in a teacher lunchroom I was asked by a colleague if I made Mexican food a lot. I laughed and said, "Sure, but in my house, we just call it dinner!"

We celebrate: Dia de los Muertos: My dad died last year on November 1st so this year is especially important. Dia de los Reyes. We pray our novenas. Las Posadas. May crowning. And many more. Most of which are grounded in religion related to the culture.