

Hispanic Heritage Month

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For many students, September means the beginning of school, more homework and less time to spend with family. However, for Hispanic families around the nation, September is the start of a month filled with pride, culture and celebration—otherwise known as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Originally initiated by Congress in 1968, this month celebrates U.S. Latinos and their nationalities. Former President Lyndon Johnson created Hispanic Heritage Week, until former President Ronald Reagan

decided one week was not enough and extended the celebration from Sept. 22 through Oct. 15. The celebration begins in the middle of the month rather than the beginning because it coincides with five Latin countries' independence days: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica closely followed by Mexico Sept. 16, Chile Sept. 18 and Belize Sept. 21.

With more than 17 percent of the country's population (55.6 million people) having Hispanic roots in South Florida, Hispanic Heritage Month means many different

contests, events and festivals including the University of Miami celebration and different family-oriented activities sponsored by the Miami Heat.

Not only does this month shine light on Hispanic tradition, but it also recognizes important members of the society. Many Hispanic parents who celebrate this month not only make sure to teach their kids about revolutionary figures, but also fill evenings with family-oriented activities such as cooking, eating dinner together or playing soccer and other sports.

HISPANIC MEDIA MAKES AN IMPACT

Our students' favorite Hispanic quotes.



Joao Paolo Castro, a senior from Brazil.
"La lengua no tiene hueso, pero corta lo más grueso."
--Anonymous



Daniela Velez, a senior from Colombia.
"Soñar el sueño imposible, luchar contra el enemigo imposible, correr donde valientes no atrevieron, alcanzar la estrella inalcanzable. Ese es mi destino."
--Don Quijote



Isabel Mitre, a senior from Mexico.
"Sucede que me canso de mis pies y mis uñas y mi pelo y mi sombra. Sucede que me canso de ser hombre"
--Pablo Neruda, "Walking Around"
Paula Mitre, a junior from Mexico.
"Entre broma y broma, la verdad se asoma,"
-- Mrs. Mitre



"Dianne Strauss, a junior from Cuba and Mexico.
"Aprender a dudar es aprender a pensar."
--Octavio Paz

(Photo Submitted L-R/Joao Paolo Castro, Daniela Velez, Paula Mitre and Dianne Strauss)

Am I Less Hispanic For Not Speaking Spanish?

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Whenever I go to family reunions, I know for a fact my grandpa talks bad about me. Well, not me, just my inability to speak Spanish. While he has every reason to feel frustrated that I do not know his native language fluently, the constant backhanded comments made me feel inadequate and unaccepted. On standardized tests I would question if I could fill in the "Hispanic" box in the ethnicity section. If my family thinks of me as less Hispanic, shouldn't I?

I am not the only one to go through this identity crisis. Huffington Post's John Paul Brammer explains in "To the Latinos Who Can't Speak Spanish" that he grew up thinking he "wasn't Latino enough" because he could not speak Spanish. Additionally, the number of Spanish-speaking Hispanic homes are decreasing.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, only 74 percent of Hispanic families spoke Spanish at home in 2016.

If I am not the only non-Spanish-speaking Hispanic, why am I questioning my heritage? Through the years I realized that being Hispanic is not limited to the language. I know Vaporub is a miracle worker and I know how to avoid a chancleta. I know family comes first, and even if I make a fool of myself while dancing, I love the beat. Hispanic heritage is not limited to mere tongue; it is my way of life, the way my family parties, the way my family is the loudest on the block even though I am the quietest in the class. To the Hispanics who can't speak Spanish; don't doubt your heritage. Instead, play some Maluma and smile; it's in your blood.