



Dear Principals, Administrators, and Teachers:

On behalf of the History and Literary Arts Program at the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC), I write to invite schools, teachers and students to participate in a new educational program that celebrates bilingual literacy and translation.

The “Un Poema: Tantas Voces” junior translator project encourages students’ sense of pride in their native or adopted Spanish language while nurturing their ability to read and interpret poetry in Spanish. We’ve created the program to inspire lively, bilingual conversation about differences in interpretation and meaning while building students’ common core skills in analyzing a text, determining the meaning of words and phrases, understanding figurative and connotative language, navigating between Spanish and English, and more.

The project consists of the following components:

1. Educators in the History and Literary Arts Program (HLA) visit classes to present the project and featured poem, “En el valle de Zapata” by Veronica Volkow (Mexico, b. 1955). The staff also leads the students through a brief and engaging translation exercise, encouraging enthusiasm for the process of literary translation.
2. Students can be assigned parts of the poem, or the entire poem.
3. Teachers continue working with students as they undertake translation, including close reading, effective use of references (dictionaries, synonyms, etc.) through individual, pair and small group work. We also encourage teachers to invite students’ families into the process. Validating both the students’ and families native and/or learned Spanish is an important feature of the program.
4. Teachers are also invited to enhance lesson plans with creative assignments, e.g. ask students to create drawings, paintings, photos and/or collages inspired by the poems; record the poem in the original Spanish and English translation; record “letters” to the poet; and more.
5. All educational activities result in an English translation of parts of or the entire poem.
6. Teachers, students and families present their translations (and related assignments) at a culminating event (in-person or virtual) coordinated by the NHCC. Schools, teachers, and students will be awarded certificates of appreciation for their participation.

continued

Enclosed is a program packet with more information, the poem, and resources for teachers including common core standards and suggestions for teaching.

Interested teachers are invited to contact Patricia Perea, History and Literary Arts Educator, to participate in the project. We look forward to working with your school and community to make this project worthwhile, memorable, and rewarding for all involved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Valerie Martínez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "z".

Valerie Martínez
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