BIGELOW FORJ

FAMILIES ORGANIZING FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2022
LISTEN, DO, READ, WATCH

Dear members of the Bigelow community,

Welcome to the new school year! We hope that you and your families have had a wonderful start to the year. For those of you who are new to the Bigelow community, we (Bigelow FORJ) send out a monthly newsletter highlighting FORJ events and activities, information on different cultural holidays and celebrations, and fun, educational, and meaningful cultural events in the Boston area.

Today marks the first day of **Hispanic Heritage Month**. It runs from September 15th – October 15th and was first observed in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week. It was later expanded to a full month in 1988. The day of September 15th is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for the following Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16th and September 18th, respectively.

Hispanic Heritage month focuses on a different theme each year. This year's theme is **Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation**. The diversity among Hispanics is "our strength, and our contributions to the culture, the economy, and the future of our nation cannot be denied." For more information on Hispanic Heritage month, click here. You can also visit this link from the Boston Globe to learn about ways to celebrate the month in the Boston area

SAVE THE DATE: Bigelow Middle School Picnic in Franklin Park

Date: **Sunday, October 23, 2022**, **1:00-3:00 pm** (Rain date: Sunday, October 30th)

Location: Franklin Park Valley Gates (Next to the Franklin Park Zoo) at the intersection of Circuit Drive and Jewish War Veterans Drive, Boston

Please join Principal Coston, the Newton METCO program, Bigelow PTO, Bigelow FORJ, and our Boston and Newton families for fall fun and connections as we start the 2022 school year! Pizza graciously provided by the Bigelow PTO. Families are also welcome to bring food.

Please scroll down for meaningful, educational, and entertaining experiences for you and your family to LISTEN, DO, READ, & WATCH.

Margo Michaels & Jeanne Choe-Arrieta
Co-Leads, Bigelow FORJ

LISTEN:

Anything for Selena: A podcast on Selena Quintanilla-Pèrezone, one of the most influential Latinx artists of all time with the most tragic of stories. In Apple Podcasts' *Show of the Year of 2021*, Maria García combines rigorous reporting with impassioned storytelling to honor Selena's legacy. She also explores the indelible mark she left on Latinx identity and belonging. Click here to listen.

Rubirosa (***podcast***): Did you know James Bond's character was based on a Dominican man, Porfiro Rubirosa? He was a diplomat, international polo champ, pilot, race car driver, and spoke 5 languages. Rubirosa became the world's richest man twice, and his story supposedly inspired Bond's character from Ian Fleming's franchise. Witness Docs' "Rubirosa" shares his true story, hosted by the Dominican-American author, storyteller, and lifelong James Bond fan Christopher Rivas. Click here to listen.

DO:

El Pasado Mio/My Own Past: Visit the Cooper Gallery, which hosts an event to kick off a new exhibition highlighting Cuban artists of African descent. The exhibition, which includes more than 50 pieces from the 19th century to modern day, features a rich collection of creators and stories often overlooked by historians. The show runs until Dec. 21. *Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African & African American Art, 102 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge. Sept. 16 from 6 to 8 p.m. Free. coopergallery.fas.harvard.edu*

Sound Bites Series at Bradley: Latin Night: Slip on your dance shoes and get ready to salsa at Latin Night, featuring live music from the Boston Music Project. The event will start with a 30-minute dance lesson before opening up the floor. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. *Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate, 2468B Washington St., Canton. Sept. 22 at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are $25 for nonmembers and $20 for members. thetrustees.org*

Latinx Heritage Month at Mozart Park: Jamaica Plain's Mozart Park is the place to celebrate Afro-Latinx Heritage with the Hyde Square Task Force. Artist Roberto Chao will lead a team of local artists in the creation of a 160-foot-long mural running through Boston's Latin Quarter. Stop by to meet the artists and watch the mural come to life. *Mozart Park, 10 Mozart St., Jamaica Plain. Sept. 24 from noon to 4 p.m. Free. facebook.com*

Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month Celebration Day: The Museum of Science hosts a day filled with fun and festive activities, in partnership with El Mundo Boston. Attendees can take in a number of permanent bilingual exhibits, learn about how climate change is impacting Latin

America, meet astrophysicist Rodolfo Montez Jr., and try their hand at designing a piñata. *Museum of Science, 1 Museum of Science Driveway, Boston. Oct. 1 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets included with general admission. mos.org*

READ:

The Last Karankawas: A book by Kimberly Garza. The time is 2008. Hurricane Ike is about to batter the Gulf Coast, unraveling the lives of a group Mexican and Filipino residents in Galveston, Texas. Garza manages to expertly capture a range of voices in this stunning and elegiac polyphonic novel published in August. Expect great things from this debut writer. (Henry Holt, 2022)

High-Risk Homosexual: A book by Edgar Gomez. This book examines Latinx queer identity in all its layers while incisively critiquing the notion of machismo as a cultural marker. In prose that is at turns funny and savvy as it is serious and contemplative, Gomez has written the memoir I wish I could have. (Soft Skull Press, 2022)

Locas: A book by Yxta Maya Murray. Murray's tale of two female gang members in East L.A. holding their own amid the violence and mayhem around them is searing and unapologetic, giving us a far more complicated depiction of Latino inner city life than what is typically offered. As more of Los Angeles experiences gentrification, Murray's book provides us with a look back at what our neighborhoods once were. (Grove Press, 1997)

WATCH:

Boston's Latin Quarter: A short documentary by Monica Cohen and produced by the BOOM House touches on the importance of the preservation of cultural enclaves within the city of Boston. The Latin Quarter, a Latinx neighborhood in the middle of Jamaica Plain in Boston, sets an example of community, resilience and growth. This film explores the history, the struggles and the impact such a neighborhood can have on a community, a city and most importantly, the next generation of Latinx in Boston. Click here to watch the 21-minute documentary on YouTube. To learn even more about the history of Boston's Latin Quarter, click here to visit the Hyde Square Task Force's website.

FORJ is a group of diverse families helping our children learn about issues of power and inequality and how to stand up for racial justice. We seek to generate understanding and curiosity about the differences in our society, and to work together towards racial equity. We strive to achieve safe and welcoming environments that enhance the well-being of all people. We promote healing and connection between individuals and communities. We speak out against injustice, support our kids to be upstanders, and take action to address bias and inequity.

If you are interested in getting involved with Bigelow FORJ to help build an anti-racist community or if you'd like publicize any future events, recommend videos, movies, podcasts, or books, please email bigelowforj@gmail.com.

To receive the monthly, district-wide, FORJ email that includes information about lectures on race and diversity, discussion groups, community events, and Newton Public Schools updates, please email forjnewton@gmail.com.