

Volume 1,  
Issue 4  
May 2003

# REFORMA Colorado Newsletter



## Colorado Libraries Celebrate Día de los Niños, Día de los Libros

**The Ross-Barnum Branch** of the Denver Public Library celebrated its first Día del Niño holiday last Wednesday, April 30th, a day that is internationally recognized as the Day of the Child. The library staff was instrumental in the success of the program ensuring that all activities went smoothly.

Also instrumental were the financial contributors - the Colorado Chapter of REFORMA and the Mexican Cultural Center. The performers gave freely of their time and talents, and Channel 57 filmed the event. The Girl Scouts of America and Museo de las Américas sent volunteers to help with the craft events. Munroe Elementary's dance troupe and Sandy García's Mestizo Dancers generously donated their talent. Storytellers—Steve Johnson, director of the Museo de las Américas, and Patty McLaughlin of Clínica Campesina—enchanted the children with stories and health tips.

And what would a Día del Niño celebration be without cookies, popsicles, juice, and piñatas? Since there were no trees from which to hang the piñatas, innovation prevailed and a raffle took place. There were also Spanish and

bilingual book giveaways for children during the festivities. This was a great hit.

As all good things must come to an end, the children returned to school with gifts, refreshments, and books. The gala event shows that a library is truly an integral part of the community in which people can take pride and contribute to programs that celebrate children.

—*Story and photos submitted by Amando Álvarez & Debbie Gonzales*



**Perl Mack Branch** of the Adams County Library celebrated Día de Los Niños, Día de Los Libros with Cha-Cha the Clown reading children's poems and making balloon sculptures for the children. Patty McLaughlin was on hand giving bilingual fingerplays and movement songs.

Oralia Escalera volunteered to serve cookies and punch. The children decorated hand made book bags with fabric paint and then were able to select a book of their very own to take home. Books were donated by the Adams County Library Friends. A special thanks to Debbie McCrery and Denise Bryant who did the book bag sewing with a cheerful yellow fabric. Georgia Neilsen photographed the event and helped Cynthia Woodruff fill candy bags, which the children took home to enjoy. Ruth DeChant Munive coordinated the celebration, which brought many new faces to the library.

—*Story & photo submitted by Ruth DeChant Munive & Georgia Neilsen*



## We Dream Our Own Dreams

At the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the REFORMA Colorado Chapter, guest speaker Francisco Miraval spoke on concepts of time in the Latino culture. He began with an invitation to dream. In dreams, a connection is often established between seemingly unconnected things. Likewise, to reach a person of another culture, we must sometimes connect as we do in dreams.

Latinos, said Miraval, possess three essential characteristics: brotherhood, the desire to create, and an acceptance of the presence of the Divine. My grandmother, said Miraval, used to say: “*Dios camina en mi cocina.*” God walks in my kitchen. Learning to speak another’s language is only part of bridging the gap between cultures. One must also understand the culture of the other.

To Latinos, said Miraval, innocence in relationship is essential. Americans speak of a Win-Win situation, which implies use of the other. “In the Latino concept of relationship,” said Miraval, “I can have a relationship in which you win, but I don’t lose!”

Part of the creative process is the ability to play with time. The Greeks have two words for time: *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* is chronological time, very important to Americans who view promptness as a virtue. *Kairos* suggests that there is a proper moment for all things. It also suggests that people are always more important than agendas. The last essential characteristic deals with dreams and spirituality. “Unless you dream your own dreams into existence,” said Miraval, “you will always try to control the dreams of others.”

Ninety-five percent of the Hispanic population in the U. S. identifies with some concept of the Divine in daily life. Although only 19% of Latinos identify with an established church, the spiritual element prevails. To the majority of the Latino population, life has a purpose, and all are united as brothers and sisters in the human family.

Mr. Miraval then entertained questions from the audience. Mollie Hagen (Sheridan Public Library) asked what kind of programming would best reach the Latino community. Miraval replied, “Use a window of time.” This would imply that an event such as an open house or a regularly scheduled drop-in activity might fit the needs of the community we are trying to reach better than a one-time lecture or event. When asked if there were different words in Spanish for time, such as the two Greek words, Miraval replied with a single word, “Mañana!” People are always more important than time.

Pilar Castro-Reino (Denver Public Library) commented on a personal experience with a non-Spanish speaking volunteer. Pilar was uncertain how this volunteer would do in her primarily Spanish-speaking area of Denver, but the results were surprising. “This person was so welcoming,” said Pilar, “that people really benefited by her presence and helpful manner. It did not matter that she could not speak Spanish. It only mattered that she cared about the people who walked in the door.”

Mr. Miraval also stressed the importance of Latinos helping Latinos. The composition of our Latino community is very mixed, with varying degrees of education and many countries of origin. Latinos within a community can be invited to assist with library

programs that will benefit fellow Latinos. Mr. Miraval was a delight and an enlightenment! He modestly concluded, “I am not the owner of the truth, but I rent it.”

-Mary Clare Wickins

*Francisco Miraval, born in Argentina, is a writer and educator. He has a B.A. in Education & an M. A. in Philosophy (University of Buenos Aires). He is the only nationally syndicated Latino journalist in Colorado and is president of Project Vision 21.*

## Freedom to Read Protection Act

REFORMA unanimously endorsed the recommendation to submit a letter of support on behalf of the "Freedom to Read Protection Act" which would amend the Patriot Act by re-establishing standards requiring law enforcement agencies to obtain court orders and warrants to investigate library patrons and bookstore customers only after reasonable cause can be determined (as was the standard before the Patriot Act became law). Restoration of these safeguards would protect the civil liberties that should be assured to library and bookstore users in a free and democratic society.

REFORMA joins other organizations that support this effort to restore the safeguards of privacy and intellectual freedom for library and bookstore users. This legislation is pending. The bill was introduced by Representatives Bernie Sanders [Independent, VT], Raúl Grijalva [D-AZ], Peter DeFazio [D-OR], and Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX). A letter will be sent to these representatives in support of the “Sanders’ Bill,” HR1157.

