



La Voz de Esperanza

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La Voz Mail Collective

The Collective is sheltering at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic but will be returning when their health and safety can be assured. Extra funds are being raised to pay for folding La Voz each month during this time.

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- We advocate for a wide variety of social, economic & environmental justice issues.
- Opinions expressed in La Voz are not necessarily those of the Esperanza Center.

La Voz de Esperanza is a publication of

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Articles due by the 8th of each month

Policy Statements

* We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.

* All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.



Pictured with Betita in 2008 are Amy Kastely & Graciela Sánchez, Director of the Esperanza.

Dr. Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez, Chicana feminist organizer, author, activist and educator, has been an inspiration to the Esperanza Peace & Justice Center since it opened in 1987. She exemplified our vision of working in, and with, multiple communities and issues to make this a better world for all. She was living ‘intersectionality’ long before the term was popularized. Indeed, our mentor and *madrina*, Betita taught us much with every cherished interaction. Gloria Anzaldúa wrote what Betita lived: “*To survive the borderlands, you*

must live sin fronteras, be a crossroads.”

Betita’s trajectory in life led her down many roads—internationally and nationally. She embraced all individuals and groups along the way that lined up with her beliefs. When she died at 95, she was eulogized from coast to coast in the *NY Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and more!

Betita was always way ahead of her time. Tony Platt noted that “in *500 Years of Chicana History*, she included a defense of ‘mujeres who love women’ and a resolute critique of homophobia. She and Carol Hanisch wrote 40 years earlier, ‘Queer-baiting is no different from Red-baiting.’ And, in 1990, she chided the *NY Times* Book Review for failing to recognize the writings of Chicana lesbians.” In a 1999 plática at Esperanza, *No Taco Belles Here: Chicana Feminism, 1969-1999* she read from her book *De Colores Means All of Us*, where Angela Davis who wrote the forward stated, “*De Colores* is not the work of a journalistic observer of social movements, but rather that of a passionately engaged participant.”

Betita best summed up her life saying, “*Gains are made through struggle—the heart just insists on it.*”

Angelita Tovar Hernández, aka Angie Merla,



was a beloved member of the Esperanza’s Buena Gente. She lost her battle with cancer on August 10, 2021. Born on the Westside of San Antonio on August 2, 1949, she lived in a variety of places as far away as Germany, but ultimately wound up back in the Westside. As a *Corazón of the Esperanza*, Angie related her story of growing up in the Westside in the book, *Still Here, Homenaje al Westside de San Antonio* with graphic anecdotes capturing the times of *Aquellos Tiempos*. As Buena Gente of the Esperanza, Angie used her considerable skills as a craftsperson to teach the *artes manuales* of cutting *papel picado* and making *calaveritas*, sugar skulls, for *Día de los Muertos*. At Peace Market, she made generous donations for the Esperanza’s *Tiendita* from her array of collectibles and made sure volunteers were fed breakfast at the annual *Paseo del Westside*. Our sincere condolences to her *querido*, Jimmy Kitchen, and to her family and friends, of which there are many. She will be sorely missed, but her spirit of giving and teaching will remain with us. The irreplaceable, Angelita Merla, presente!

ATTENTION VOZ READERS: If you have a mailing address correction please send it to lavoz@esperanzacenter.org. If you want to be removed from the La Voz mailing list, for whatever reason, please let us know. La Voz is provided as a courtesy to people on the mailing list of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. **The subscription rate is \$35 per year (\$100 for institutions).** The cost of producing and mailing La Voz has substantially increased and we need your help to keep it afloat. To help, send in your subscriptions, sign up as a monthly donor, or send in a donation to the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Thank you. -GAR

VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.