

FOUNDATION REACHING OUT ACROSS PERCEIVED CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC DIVIDES

Kenosha Community Foundation participates in National Community Foundation Week by celebrating the impact and promise of local and highly connective philanthropy.

I plan to spotlight across several independent columns an exploration of "mission moments" created by our Kenosha Community Foundation. KCF's "mission moments" represent how our independent nonprofit charity, supported by a host of local philanthropists, fulfills our purpose for existence and leaves impactful "ripples" across our communities. A KCF "mission moment" is fulfilling an enduring promise unfolding in real time that transforms our community.

Today, I am highlighting a new KCF fund called "Orgullo Hispano (Hispanic Pride) Scholarship." It was created less than a year ago and is the first of its kind locally. It is appealing to all Kenosha County-wide high school seniors pursuing higher education of Hispanic/Latino heritage and origin.

Today's "mission moment" is derived from a humorous story of myself joining into, at the last minute, a sort of impromptu panel presentation comprised of Hispanic/Latino leaders on a Facebook Live video post. A call came to me, and I was needed/invited to represent the new scholarship and describe, all in Spanish, the details of the unique scholarship opportunity. On the spot, I dusted off my Spanish language skills, last used circa 2004. I promoted "la beca nueva" (new scholarship), targeting young Facebook users, all while repeating over and over again how "orgullosa" (proud) I am—and KCF is—to host the scholarship and partner to such an extent for the advancement of Hispanic/Latino students.

The two funders and advisors who oversaw the establishment of this new and uniquely Kenoshan scholarship (and fellow panelists) are outstanding leaders in our community, Francisco Loyola and Karla Arzate.

Francisco Loyola is the Executive Director at the Kenosha Creative Space (KCS), the hub for local performing arts and arts/culture-related entrepreneurship. Karla Arzate is a co-owner of Lomeli Butcher Shop, a family-owned company seeking a path to support the Hispanic/Latino community through philanthropic giving.

Francisco and Karla (and their many collaborators) successfully raised the entirety of the balance of the scholarship fund through the organization of a free cultural festival by the same name— "Festival Orgullo Hispano." They have shown how effective a strategy can be that hinges upon an authentic and humble reliance upon the broader community of interest to support something that matters. In effect, it's through this scholarship that an increasingly unified and self-aware Hispanic/Latino community has come to "grow its own."

KCF is making a small but powerful effort to reach out authentically across perceived cultural and linguistic "divides." It is a mix of humility and humor that may allow us all to do so in our respective spaces and communities across Kenosha County. No doubt, we at KCF count ourselves "orgullosos" to be a part of that important work.

Amy Greil

Executive Director