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**Center for Latino Arts and Culture Celebrates 15 Years of Community Service Through the Arts: Proceeds of anniversary gala to establish student scholarship**

The Center for Latino Arts and Culture ([CLAC](#)) is celebrating 15 years of continuous service to Rutgers and communities across New Jersey with an anniversary gala and program, "Building on a Legacy of Community Service through the Arts." The event will take place at the Rutgers Student Center on the College Avenue Campus in New Brunswick Nov. 10, 2007, at 8 p.m.

[Hon. Nina Mitchell Wells](#), New Jersey's secretary of state, and [Rutgers President Richard L. McCormick](#), the honorary chair of the gala, are among the speakers for the event. The evening program will feature a pre-gala art exhibition and reception, starting at 7 p.m., followed by a dinner program featuring live and recorded performances by outstanding Rutgers alumni, an art auction and a concert by Grammy Award winner Eddie Palmieri y La Perfecta II.

The gala, which coincides with Latin Heritage Month celebrations at Rutgers, will serve as an important homecoming event for Latino alumni. The program highlights the achievements of Rutgers alumni in the arts and honors funders, community leaders, faculty and artists for their leadership. This year's honorees are Dr. Michael J. Bzdak, director of corporate contributions at Johnson & Johnson; Daniel H. Jara, president and CEO of the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey; Asela Rodríguez-Laguna, professor and chair of classical and modern languages at Rutgers-Newark; and New Brunswick artist Claudio Mir, a Mason Gross School of the Arts alumnus and a longtime collaborator in CLAC community-based programs.

The proceeds of the gala and auction will go to an endowment for a new scholarship fund that will support Latino and other minority students pursuing art and cultural studies degrees at Rutgers. Visual artists who have donated work for the auction include Olga Bautista, Monica Camin, Jo-Anne Echevarría-Myers, Diana González Gandolfi, Humberto Guanipa, Noé Hernandez, Cristina Hoyos, Ezequiel Jiménez, María Lau, Mariana Maldonado, María Mijares, Julio Nazario, Raphael Montañez Ortiz, Rodriguez Calero, Mariam Romais, Armando Sosa, Yilis Suriel, Karin Weyland and Raul Villareal.

Photographs of the artwork will be available for online viewing beginning Monday, Oct. 15, at the CLAC Web site, [clac.rutgers.edu](http://clac.rutgers.edu). Multiple sponsorship and advertising opportunities are available. For program, auction and ticket information, contact the CLAC at 732-932-1263 or visit [clac.rutgers.edu](http://clac.rutgers.edu).

The CLAC was established in 1992 by a committee of Latino faculty, staff and students from Rutgers. In 1996, under the leadership of its founding director, Isabel Nazario, the Center for Latino Arts and Culture was awarded the New Jersey Exemplary State and Local Award. Beginning in 1996, the CLAC created a coalition of community-based organizations in New Brunswick to develop the Artists Mentoring Against Racism, Drugs, and Violence: Healing Through the Arts Summer Camp. The camp, now in its 11th year, provides arts education and health mentoring to at-risk Latino and African-American children.

In 2004, the CLAC created the statewide initiative "Transcultural New Jersey," developing a wide array of collaborative public art programs involving artists and institutions, such as museums and libraries. The initiative now provides professional opportunities for visual artists across the state. The CLAC has researched and produced more than 30 exhibitions and catalogs, and continues to organize academic, student development and public service programs that engage students, faculty, artists and community members in a process of exploration of what it means to be Latino in the United States and throughout the world.