

CHCI Announces 39th Annual Hispanic Heritage Month Theme and Events

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Washington, DC – The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), the nation's leading Hispanic leadership development and educational services organization, today announced the theme **Educate. Engage. Vote** for its 39th Annual Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM) celebration in Washington, D.C. on September 13-15, 2016. CHCI hosts the nation's premier events commemorating HHM, which draw more than 3,000 Latino and national leaders from across the country and thousands of live stream viewers from across the globe, to its Public Policy Conference and Annual Awards Gala.

"The year 2016 represents an amazing opportunity for the Latino community to make its voice heard and wield an incredible amount of influence on the future direction of America," said Rep. Linda T. Sánchez, CHCI Chair. "That's why this year's conference theme and events will focus on how American Latinos are engaging in the political process and ensuring they are represented at the highest levels when decisions are made that affect our community. When we translate our growth in numbers into political, cultural and economic influence, America wins."

CHCI will honor renowned actor and entertainer [Cheech Marin and Anna Maria Chavez](#), chief executive officer of Girls Scouts USA, with its Medallion of Excellence Awards in recognition of their accomplishments, leadership and outstanding service to the Latino community at CHCI's 39th Annual Awards Gala on September 15, 2016. The event is the largest gathering of Latino leaders in the country.

Cheech Marin, primarily known as an actor, director and performer, is familiar to many as one-half of the hilarious duo Cheech and Chong; together, they made eight feature films. He has since appeared in more than 20 films and numerous television shows. In 2005, Cheech directed the Broadway production of *Latinologues*, a collection of comedic and poignant monologues revealing the Latino experience in America.

A third-generation Mexican American, Cheech has received numerous awards for his work on behalf of Latinos, including the 2000 Creative Achievement Award from the Imagen Foundation and the 1999 ALMA Community Service Award from the National Council of La Raza and Kraft Foods.

In 2007, he received an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts for his contributions to the creative arts from Otis College of Art & Design in Los Angeles, and received the inaugural Legacy Award for Arts Advocacy from the Smithsonian Latino Center. He serves on the boards of the Smithsonian Latino Center and the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

Anna Maria Chávez began her career journey in the very same movement she now leads: Girl Scouts. A lifetime member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and an award-winning community leader, Anna developed the leadership skills growing up as a Girl Scout in Eloy, Arizona, that would propel her to the office of the chief executive of GSUSA.

Anna's experiences in Girl Scouting lit a passion for public service and social engagement that have defined her educational and career paths. Her desire to make the world a better place led her from her hometown to Yale University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in American history before pursuing a juris doctorate at the University of Arizona.

She has since been admitted to the Bar of the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, the Arizona Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Anna's interest in serving others brought her first to Washington, DC, where she held numerous posts in President Bill Clinton's administration, including senior policy advisor to former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater. She later returned to her home state of Arizona to serve as deputy chief of staff for urban relations and community development under then-Governor Janet Napolitano.

CHCI kicks off its 2016 Hispanic Heritage Month events with its annual [Public Policy Conference](#) at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center on September 13-14. This year, CHCI Chair Rep. Linda Sanchez will be joined by Congressional Hispanic Caucus members, administration officials, and national experts and scholars to participate in timely discussions of major policy issues affecting the Latino community.

The closing and premier event of the week is CHCI's [39th Annual Awards Gala](#). This prestigious dinner recognizes CHCI's highest honorees and celebrates the outstanding accomplishments of Latino leaders who are giving back to their communities. The Gala draws more than 2,000 guests including federal and local elected officials, corporate and nonprofit leaders, and celebrities.

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated annually from September 15 - October 15. For CHCI, it also represents an opportunity to feature its highly competitive and nationally acclaimed Latino youth leadership development programs, including two fellowship programs, a congressional internship program, scholarship-intern programs, and college readiness programs, *Ready to Lead (R2L®)* and R2L® NextGen, for high school students.

About CHCI

CHCI is the premier Hispanic nonprofit and nonpartisan 501(c)(3) leadership development organization in the country that educates, empowers, and connects Latino youth by providing leadership development programs and educational services. CHCI directly impacts the lives of more than 1,700 students and young professionals each year through its [fellowships](#), [congressional internships](#), [scholar-intern programs](#), [Ready to Lead \(R2L®\)](#) college readiness program, and [R2L NextGen](#) program. [CHCI NextOpp](#) is its latest resource allowing young Latinos to save, search and share life-changing opportunities for Latinos across the United States.

The [CHCI Board of Directors](#) is comprised of Hispanic members of Congress, nonprofit, union and corporate leaders. Visit www.chci.org, or join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#).

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