

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

The Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is excited to share the heritage month newsletter to highlight diverse communities. We hope to increase our shared understanding and appreciation of the rich histories, cultures, and people from different heritages. For more information on diverse holidays and celebrations, please visit the [NIH Diversity Calendar](#).

## History and Significance

Every year, from September 15 to October 15, we celebrate Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month to honor the histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans with Hispanic or Latine ancestry. Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month started as a week-long acknowledgment in 1968 and has grown to a month-long celebration. The dates were selected to coincide with the independence days of Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

This year's theme, 'Pioneers of Change: Shaping the Future Together,' emphasizes the spirit of innovation, resilience, and unity that define the Hispanic/Latine experience. It also honors all trailblazers and pioneers who have paved the way for future generations in this country.

## Ways to Celebrate in NYC

Here are a few ways to celebrate locally:

- [Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at these NYC events](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage Month Events Round Up](#)
- [NYC Park's Hispanic Heritage Month Events](#)
- [NYPL's Hispanic & Latinx Heritage Month Events](#)

## El Barrio: A Home Away from Home

El Barrio, also known as East Harlem or Spanish Harlem, is a historically rich neighborhood in Manhattan, spanning from East 96th Street to East 125th Street, from Fifth Avenue to the East River. Throughout history, the area was home to the Mohican and Munsee Lenape Tribes, African American farmers, and German and Irish immigrants. In the early 20th century, a wave of Puerto Ricans settled in the area and created a close-knit community, transforming it into El Barrio, Spanish word for "neighborhood". Over the years, people from many countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Mexico, also shaped this neighborhood's incredible diversity and vibrancy. El Barrio is also known for its community resiliency and empowerment, for their residents advocating for their rights when faced with many social issues such as crimes and poverty. Although the neighborhood and demographics are ever-changing, El Barrio is still adored for its Latin American and Caribbean cuisines, colorful murals, street festivals, and a strong sense of community. New Yorkers can learn more about El Barrio by visiting many historical sites such as El Museo del Barrio, dedicated to Latin American and Caribbean art, and reading about iconic figures such as Tito Puente, a legendary Latin jazz musician and composer, who was born and raised in El Barrio.

## Community Spotlight



As a proud Boricua, Roberto Rodríguez Cartagena attributes his resiliency and adaptability as a scientist to his Puerto Rican heritage.

Growing up in Puerto Rico, he was always inspired by people overcoming natural disasters and political upheavals together. This instilled in him the value of caring for others during difficult times and persevering through challenges in his academic journey.

After attending the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, Roberto moved to Seattle for a post-bac program before arriving at Rockefeller. As a fourth-year student in the Hatten lab, he firmly believes that the best science is done by diverse crowds who bring unique perspectives. This belief led to his passion for connecting with and mentoring underrepresented students. Roberto was involved in various Rockefeller recruitment and outreach efforts and student groups to help students from diverse backgrounds find their footing in academia. Currently, he serves as a webinar coordinator for Científico Latino. This organization aims to promote an environment of inclusivity in STEM and to inform others about the intricacies of the graduate school admissions process and hidden curriculum to help students succeed in graduate programs.

Roberto envisions continuing his academic journey as an independent investigator and is interested in science diplomacy. He wishes to always value people as the most important part of science and prioritize creating inclusive communities for diverse scientists throughout his career.

Roberto loves exploring new restaurants outside the lab, attending music festivals and karaoke, and making new friends.