

1-2013

Que Ondee Sola - January 2013

Alyssa N. Villegas

QUE ONDEE SOLA

"LA EDUCACIÓN ROMPE LAS CADENAS"

Dedicated to the 40th Anniversary of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School



JANUARY 2013 VOL. 40 NO. 7

Y ya pronto llegará el día en que la fuerza de mi bandera humillará los barrotes que le aprisionan

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Editor-in-chief

Alyssa N. Villegas

Copy Editor

Abraham Esparza

Staff Writers

Josue Contreras

Rebecca Medina

Katherin Padilla

Jessie Fuentes

Guest Designer for this issue

Alejandro Luis Molina

Que Ondee Sola is published at Northeastern Illinois University. The opinions expressed in **Que Ondee Sola** do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration. Responsibility for its contents lies solely with the staff.

Que Ondee Sola

5500 N. St. Louis,
Chicago, IL, 60625

Room E-041—(773) 442-4583

queondeesola@gmail.com

www.queondeesola.org

We appreciate and encourage suggestions and contributions.

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Editorial</i> | 3 |
| <i>Historical Reflection of a Practitioner</i> | 4 |
| <i>Critical Pedagogy, Community Building, and Self-Determination</i> | 5 |
| <i>Siempre Pa'Lante!: Celebrating 40 Years of Commitment</i> | 7 |
| <i>Greening the Rooftops of Paseo Boricua</i> | 9 |
| <i>A Movement to Empower Young Families</i> | 11 |
| <i>Who was Ferd Eggan?</i> | 13 |
| <i>Dreaming in Puerto Rican</i> | 15 |
| <i>La Escuelita: Home in Community</i> | 16 |
| <i>Alumni Well Wishes</i> | 17 |
| <i>Somos Fruto de Nuestro Ayer Program</i> | 20 |
| <i>A Few Hours A Week</i> | 22 |
| <i>Students Write to Oscar López Rivera & Well Wishes</i> | 23 |
| <i>Transformation Through Engagement</i> | 27 |
| <i>Yo Recuerdo A Irma</i> | 28 |
| <i>Creating a Decolonizing and Culturally Relevant Curriculum</i> | 34 |
| <i>Living, Breathing Solidarity</i> | 35 |
| <i>Sembrando Semillas</i> | 36 |
| <i>Lucha y Resistencia: the Foundations of a Legacy</i> | 37 |

Misión

Que Ondee Sola was established in 1972 and remains the oldest Puerto Rican & Latina/o university student publication in the United States. Our mission is to provide the NEIU community with a relevant and engaging publication that deals with student issues with a focus on Puerto Rican and Latinas/os, our communities, and our patrias.

Que Ondee Sola continues to affirm the right of Puerto Rican self-determination, freedom for all Puerto Rican political prisoners, and support for a truly participatory democracy.

EDITORIAL

ALYSSA N. VILLEGAS & JOSÉ E. LÓPEZ



On Saturday, January 26th, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School celebrates 40 years since its foundation with an all day symposium and gala. What began as a small experiment of building an organic educational practice has since become a pedagogical model for reflection and emulation. From its inception, the school's educational program was framed on the philosophical foundation of self-determination, the methodology of self-actualization, and the ethics of self-sufficiency. Contrary to the predominant societal motto of "Live and let live," this is best expressed in the words of our great poet, Consuelo Lee Corretjer: "Live and help to live." Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) began its operation in 1972 in a din-

gy church basement located at 2048 West Augusta with 12 students and no budget, at a time when the dropout rate among Puerto Rican youth in the public schools was an appalling 72.9%. First named the Puerto Rican High School, it later took on the name of



Rafael Cancel Miranda, the Puerto Rican national hero who was then a political prisoner, before its final renaming for *El Maestro*, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos. After one year



it moved to a rental space at St. Aloysius School at 1520 North Claremont with nearly 60 students. Three years later it would occupy its own building at 1671 North Claremont, and in 2003 it moved to its present location at 2739-41 West Division on *Paseo Boricua*. These moves were informed by encroaching gentrification that has displaced the Puerto Rican presence in West Town and Humboldt Park. *Que Ondee Sola* is proud to dedicate this issue to the 40th anniversary of the founding of this unique educational experience of the Puerto Rican diaspora. PACHS is the only school in the US with a curriculum focused on Puerto Rican culture, while continuing innovative learning practices—for example the

CONTINUED PAGE 26

A HISTORICAL REFLECTION OF A PRACTITIONER

MARVIN GARCIA

My name is Marvin Garcia and I serve as the board chair of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School. I am proud to say that I have been associated with this unique institution since 1979 and have served as the director for 17 years. Five family members have graduated from the school and I have established strong friendships with alumni and staff that span over thirty-three years.

I have participated in the graduations of students, their children, and grandchildren. I see alumni who still live in the community making contributions in the areas of education, health care and social services. Many of our students have gone on to be doctors, lab technicians, teachers, high school principals, Directors of child care centers, therapists, work in both the corporate sector and the government. For you sports lovers, one of our students was a ball boy for the Chicago Bulls when they were winning all those championships in the nineties.

Our teachers have published and gone on to be university professors, a minister, an actress, and even a

U.S. Congressman. Our school has won a national education award twice, hosted Paulo Freire and Howard Zinn. We have been highlighted in the movie, "A Matter of Struggle", took on the local channel 2 affiliate when they red baited our school, we were supported by Operation PUSH and Rosa Parks, inspired Piri Thomas, and had visitors come from all over the world to see exactly what we were doing.

We were and are active in many education organizations such as the National Coalition for Alternative and Community Schools, who co-sponsored with us the "Freedom to Think, Freedom to Learn and Freedom to Act" conference in 1987. We were co-founders of the Alternative Schools Network of Chicago in 1974 and later the Youth Connection Charter School in the 1990's.

We have innovated over the years; today, with the collaboration of our partners, we have a curriculum that centers on Urban Agriculture anchored by a fantastic green house, a data driven social emotional program, and a portfolio research presentation as cap-

stone for graduation. We have the longest running program, the Family Learning Center, that serves young mothers and parents.

Our slogan has been "Live and Help to Live", as coined by our national heroine, Dona Consuelo Lee Tapia Corretjer. Our work has been to transform lives and build community. We have engaged in the struggle against gentrification. We have fought for the statue of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos in Humboldt Park, which resulted in the creation of Paseo Boricua. We are active in immigration reform and have supported Elvira Arellano when she took sanctuary in Adalberto United Methodist Church. We continue to participate in the campaign to free political prisoners particularly one of our founders Oscar López Rivera.

Forty years ago, the founders of the Puerto Rican High School had a vision to create a school that would change the lives of students and the community. A school that would celebrate the Puerto Rican culture and engage students in a process of decolonization. Everyone who entered the school would

CONTINUED PAGE 26

DR. PEDRO ALBIZU CAMPOS PUERTO RICAN HIGH SCHOOL: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, COMMUNITY- BUILDING, AND SELF-DETERMINATION

MATTHEW A. RODRÍGUEZ, MICHAEL RODRÍGUEZ

Principal of PACHS

PH.D, Brown University



Brief History

Forty years ago, members of Chicago's Puerto Rican community and its allies began an educational experiment that blossomed into the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School (PACHS). The concept of PACHS emerged following a community campaign organized to bring relevant curricula in Puerto Rican history and culture to Tuley High School (later replaced by Roberto Clemente High School). Chicago's then conservative school board refused to hear the call for change, and out of the struggle that followed, parents, students, teachers, and activists united in 1972 to establish an independent school that would teach pride in Puerto Rican culture, history and language: The Puerto Rican High School.

Developed as a concerted grassroots response to disastrously high

dropout/pushout rates among Puerto Rican students, PACHS founders sought to provide youth with an opportunity to receive a quality high school education within a culturally rooted, community-based, and emotionally supportive environment. Decades later, PACHS continues to be a unique space of learning and healing.

As a deliberate *alternative* to conventional education, PACHS has remained anchored in the founding philosophical principles of self-determination, self-actualization and self-reliance. These principles stem from a historic practice of resistance to colonial conditions, both on the island of Puerto Rican and diaspora. PACHS has actively challenged dominant discourses that portray Puerto Rican students and other students of color as lazy, slow, and culturally inept for academic learning. Through practice and word, PACHS has insisted that dropout/pushout rates are *symptoms* rather than causes of a systematic internal colonial reality. Faced with racial discrimination, exploitation,

and marginalization, this educational project has fostered creative initiatives to meet the diverse and complicated needs of our students, families and broader community.

Shortly after being founded, the school was named Rafael Cancel Miranda, in honor of (then) imprisoned Puerto Rican nationalist and political prisoner. Though deeply grateful, Rafael Cancel Miranda expressed through correspondence that the school's name should reflect the highest expression of Puerto Rican national affirmation. As a result, the school adopted its current name, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School.

The naming of Pedro Albizu Campos (1891-1965) linked the school to a long history of Puerto Rican struggle and anti-colonial resistance. Albizu Campos – the first Puerto Rican to graduate from Harvard – was a WWI veteran, people's lawyer, labor leader, President of the Nationalist Party, and political prisoner. He is widely considered a beacon of Puerto Rican consciousness and national pride.

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

As the push-out rate among Puerto Ricans in the Chicago Public School system has not improved much since the 70s, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) remains an important alternative educational site.

Different from other schools, PACHS encourages a "family-like" environment with intimate interaction and mentorship between students and staff, something necessary for real learning to take place with our students. To ensure this PACHS offers the following: a small student population of 175 students; a teacher to student ratio of 1:16; after school programs in sports, theater, creative writing, urban agriculture, dance and philosophy; and outside of class events and activities linked to the Puerto Rican community.

Other distinguishing characteristics of PACHS include: courses in Puerto Rican Studies, two years of Spanish language, Black and Latina/o Literature, dual enrollment (college credit) classes at the Wilbur Wright Humboldt Park Vocational Educational Center, the space for a staff learning community with departmental planning time where teachers and staff take the time to reflect and strengthen their work, and seek out community resources to help make classroom content meaningful for teachers and students.

At the cutting edge of pedagogical innovation, our classroom instruction replaces rote memorization with an emphasis on developing higher order thinking skills of inquiry and analysis, primarily through project and problem based learning. In the years to come, our curriculum will have social ecology as a conceptual centerpiece, which stresses the interconnectedness of people to one another, their community and world.

As an example of critical education based on social ecology, our science classes have taken a close look at a recent study that designated Humboldt Park a "Food Desert," an area lacking in fresh fruits and vegetables. While learning their respective content area skills sets, the students have created a community development plan that includes multiple state-of-the-art hydroponically-based rooftop greenhouses, a conservatory, and the effective use of community gardens in and around Paseo Boricua. All of these components contribute to the community farmer's market, particularly by producing all of the ingredients of the Puerto Rican seasoning called *sofrito*.

A major and longstanding aspect of PACHS is its satellite program, the Lolita Lebrón Family Learning Center (FLC) focuses primarily on women-headed families in the Humboldt Park community. In addition to a full-

fledged high school curriculum, the young mothers have access to the following: women's studies, health and nutrition workshops, life skills workshops, childcare and parenting courses, parent and child activities, community-building events coordination, and support services. Thus, while students are working towards their high school diploma, they are also receiving information on how to maintain a literacy-rich and healthy living environment in the home. El Rinconcito del Niño/The Children's Corner, the FLC's bilingual book and game library, contains children's books and resources for a variety of age levels, from infant to primary; special collections include books focusing on family and culture.

The future of PACHS is especially bright with its vibrant and committed teaching and support staff and a student body eager to learn and intervene positively in their family and community. It continues building stronger linkages between our efforts and wider educational "campus" of Humboldt Park, as well as between our students and area universities and colleges. On the occasion of its 40th academic year, PACHS plans to dig its roots even deeper in our community and continue to provide a critical and liberatory education for the youth of our beloved barrio and city.

Que Ondee Sola

SIEMPRE PA'LANTE!: CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF COMMITMENT

DR. ANTONIA DARDER

Loyola Marymount University Prof. Emerita, University of Illinois



It was 30 years ago when I first learned about the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center of Chicago. As a Puertorriqueña who grew up very poor and culturally isolated in the West coast, my relationship with PRCC and the school served as an important cultural and political anchor. On a variety of occasions, I had the opportunity to work with teachers, students, and parents of this wonderful community. Each time, I left powerfully enriched by the experience.

One of the most significant features I observed in the educational approach of the school is a deeply grounded understanding of the

critical interrelationships that exists between culture, language, dialogue, and social consciousness. Basic to classroom life at PACHS are the critical pedagogical conditions necessary for students to build voice, name their world, and critique the problems they face daily, according to their own lived histories and cultural understanding.

Through activities informed by culture, history, art, music, science, politics, and performance, PACHS students have the room to discover and evolve, with respect to their particular talents and strengths. In the midst of dialogue, they learn to reflect and critique the world, problem-pose, make decisions, and struggle across their differences, learning to enact an ethics of community and solidarity, with peers and teachers, alike. In this way, the faculty nurtures important skills for democratic life within the classroom—skills that students can practice daily out in the world.

At PACHS, a commitment to individual and community empowerment resides at the heart of an educational process that is enacted with

clear purpose, meaning, discipline, joy, and love. High expectations are united with concrete support and genuine faith in students' capacities to excel, in ways that support personal and community integrity. The success of the school's program is best evidenced by the accomplishments of the graduates, who have excelled in a variety of fields—including education, business, and the arts—some who have returned to teach at the school or work within their community.

Yet, living a critical pedagogy in today's neoliberal world is no easy

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

task when test scores and common core standards easily override all expressed concerns about poverty or the loss of culture and language, even within disenfranchised communities of color. Education has successfully dismembered the



old multicultural agenda to unrecognizable proportions, leaving a contemporary white-washed educational agenda that silences students and their communities, amidst a dehumanizing process of schooling that numbs mind, heart, body, and spirit.

Similarly, one of the greatest challenges we face in education is the persistent belief in the intellectual and/or cultural deficiency and inferiority of our children, parents, and communities. As a consequence, schools enact policies and practices consistent with this belief and, by so doing, perpetuate educational inequalities and exclusions, no matter what proclamations are made about the academic achievement of all children. Instead, many educational policies and practices related to culture, language, assess-

ment, testing, homework, suspensions and the like, actually function to reinforce larger social problems, such as high drop-out rates, unemployment, homelessness, poor health care, and incarceration.

This hidden curriculum of schooling is difficult to dismantle, without adequate opportunities for dialogue and community participation—the very place where empowerment and critical consciousness begin. Consequently, the hegemonic tradition of schooling, whether overtly or covertly, thwarts participation and empowerment, despite orchestrations of “civic engagement.” In the absence of opportunities to forge meaningful democratic relationships within schools and communities, the colonizing culture of mainstream schooling prevails, often punishing or marginalizing those who most struggle for change.

In direct opposition to this colonial paradigm, the passionate commitment to community life at PACHS informs every aspect of educational work; and thus, is central to the cultural, intellectual, and political formation of students. This also enlivens the on-going development of the staff and teachers in the program. A powerful historical tradition, a living emancipatory pedagogy, and a culturally relevant cur-

riculum constitute an education that teaches young people not only about individual freedom, but also about their community responsibility as cultural citizens of the world.

To celebrate 40 year is a monu-



mental accomplishment! Many alternative educational programs have come and gone, in the face of economic crisis, political challenges, and internal disputes; but not PACHS, where teachers, students, and parents continue to thrive, in an educational program focused on community life, but also guided by a commitment to world where social justice, human rights, economic democracy prevail.

The rich history of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School remains a shining example of revolutionary commitment, educational excellence, and political grace. As we celebrate this milestone and the many years to come, may the passionate and decolonizing spirit of Don Pedro Albizu Campos remain ever present in our hearts—siempre pa'lante!

GREENING THE ROOFTOPS OF PASEO BORICUA

CHRISTY PRAHL

New Communities Program Director, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp

Two years ago to the day, on March 3, 2009, I recall standing in the science classroom at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS), 2739 W. Division St, during a tour of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. I listened as teacher and Assistant Principal Carlos de Jesus outlined a plan for a rooftop greenhouse to be constructed on the building, offering



students tangible applications of their studies in biology and botany.

A beautiful dream, I thought, but how could this possibly happen in our lifetimes? Like Frank Lloyd Wright's fabled mile-high skyscraper, or the closer-to-home Bloomingdale Trail, ambitious projects often seem the stuff of dreams, perhaps never to see the light of day, or at least leaving the initial planners a bit grayer around the temples than they'd hoped by groundbreaking. And rooftop urban agriculture only

happens downtown, doesn't it? Where the tourists and corporate headquarters, and therefore the capital, flow more freely?

But I stood in that same classroom yesterday, just two short years later, watching amidst a standing-room-only crowd as PACHS Principal Matthew Rodríguez cut



the ribbon for that very greenhouse. And despite my own lack of religious leanings, the experience seemed nothing short of a miracle, nothing less than sacred.

Of course the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC), either alone or in partnership, has made miracles happen before. A walk down Division Street between the mighty steel flags is a reminder of their living legacy on Paseo Boricua. But that's only part of the story. There's the community-run bilingual newspaper, *La Voz del Paseo*

Boricua, built largely out of sweat equity and volunteer labor, showcasing the positive stories happening every day in Humboldt Park. There's Vida/SIDA, an HIV/AIDS resource center which has offered bilingual and bicultural health services—including free HIV testing and condoms—for over twenty years, and more recently has sponsored



a transgender beauty pageant and a transgender business incubator.

There is the retail corridor of Paseo Boricua itself, fostering local ownership of indigenous businesses. There is the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, the La Casita community garden, the fought-for and restored Crucifixion de Pedro Albizu Campos mural on North Avenue, and the many annual parades and festivals. There is the popular Muévete exercise program, recently featured in the *New York Times*; the NIH-funded

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

Block-by-Block diabetes intervention project; and the Ciclo Urbano bike shop, poised to launch a bicycle manufacturing program, which will create jobs by constructing mobile produce delivery systems on wheels.

And of course there is PACHS itself, a school for students that conventional education forgot, where young people are encouraged to find their way by studying their own history, exploring and celebrating their unique identities, becoming local leaders, and eventually entering college, careers, or other means of contributing to the larger community. One of those students delivered a piece of original writing as part of yesterday's greenhouse ribbon-cutting: an irreverent and on-point "Green Middle-Finger Manifesto" to all the naysayers; all those who would fill her local community with alcohol, fast food, and bags of potato chips rather than healthy produce; all those who doubted this vision was possible.

But possible it was. Tangible it was. Though the continued hammering was a reminder of the labor invested in this up-to-the-minute addition to the school, visitors were invited to walk through the greenhouse structure, feeling its sturdiness, witnessing the young tomato plants and pepper and cilantro seedlings—which will form the basis of sofrito, an iconic staple of Puerto Rican cuisine—and ultimately understanding this project as a fitting tribute to Puerto Rican author and activist Juan Antonio Corretjer, whose birthday is celebrated by PRCC annually on March 3.

The greenhouse project, while making significant contributions to the PACHS science curriculum, will cast an even wider net of impact. This structure, which received administrative and/or financial support from a diverse portfolio of sources—including 26th Ward Alderman Roberto Maldonado, 4th District State Representative Cynthia Soto, the Chicago Community Trust's Fresh Taste Initiative, the Humboldt Park New Communities Program, and private contributions—is intended as just one of twenty rooftop greenhouses to eventually dot Paseo Boricua. This network will form the basis of a homegrown organic food system, providing affordable produce to Humboldt Park, which has been designated a food desert.

This is an integrated community vision of health, wellness, education, and self-actualization writ large. I'll never bite into a tomato the same way again.

Originally published on the Humboldt Park Portal.

Green middle finger manifesto

Food desert

*Lacking fresh organic vegetables that
can be accessible
to families in the community*

*Yet, a great variety of drive-thru's,
fast food,*

pick-up-and-go windows

*Lie in the alignment of our
Humboldt Park streets*

*Dinners wrapped in aluminum, pre-
heated, re-heated preservatives*

Wrapped up, boxed up,

hugged up in paper bags

That get tossed away like healthy habits

Green house

*Nurturing growth, organic fresh
vegetables*

*That can be accessible to the
community*

*Seeds that are planted in the rough of
our discordant world*

The beauty that can grow from

La Division's concrete

*Like students achieving and breaking
stereotypical molds*

Seeds that grow fast like

Humboldt Park youth

*Green House, the first step to healthy
habits as a whole*

*We are now giving a green middle finger
to our food deserted home*

Green middle finger to

Pre-heated, re-heated preservatives

*That come wrapped-up, boxed up
hugged up*

*In paper bags, that gets tossed away
like healthy habits*

Green middle finger manifesto

We are now changing Humboldt Park

*Preventing health disparities like
diabetes and obesity*

*Allowing us to live longer deep rooted in
the parks soil*

*Like Puerto Rican green peppers in this
green house sill*

We are the beautiful seeds growing

from La Division's concrete

*Like sofrito ingredients that will
cultivate,*

with the Humboldt Park youth

Green middle finger manifesto

MOTHERING AND EDUCATING: A MOVEMENT TO EMPOWER YOUNG FAMILIES

DANETTE SOKACICH & DR. LAURA JOHNSON

Founded in 1993 with federal funding through Even Start, the Lolita Lebrón Family Learning Center (FLC) was created by the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center to address the issues of single mothers who lacked a high school diploma because they dropped out of school to raise a

providing a curriculum that was culturally attentive and diverse and incorporated the lived realities of the parents into instruction.

In the years since its initial inception, the FLC has transformed into a school-based program for teen parents that supports them in

curriculum for parenting students in high school is student-centered, culturally relevant, and inter-disciplinary. The student population is Puerto Rican, Mexican, Latin American, and African American. Enrollment in the parenting program is currently at 31 students. Students utilizing the continuum of child-care services are 48 percent, while other students have off-site or home care arrangements.

Many women also revealed how they had experienced, and overcome, challenges similar to the ones facing current students. For example, Maria shared with young women at the FLC how she changed her life by enrolling in the program. She exuded warmth and energy as she exhorted young women to be resilient and reach their goals. Afterward, when asked what she hoped the young mothers would take away from her session, Maria responded: "just finish what we've started ... even though there were obstacles in our way." Amazing it has been 40 years since the founding of "La Escuelita." This will always be the pet name we have



family. Initially, the program served mothers ages 14-45, providing adult education classes, parenting and life skills workshops, intergenerational and family activities, and support services such as childcare. The program attempted to address the needs of the young women by

their endeavors as parenting high school students. Currently the FLC provides parenting support groups, curriculum in the Social History of Parenting, and a continuum of child-care services for students of the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS). The

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

for the space that was more than our school; it became the home to many of the students that benefited from its work in our community.

In the 2011-2012 academic year, *Proyecto Atabey: Intergenerational Mentorship and Leadership to Promote Strong Mothers and Families* was created to provide mentorship and support to young Latina and African American mothers, through the establishment of an intergenerational mentoring and leadership program to promote self-reliance and empowerment among this population. This collaboration is between Dr. Laura Ruth Johnson, Northern Illinois University professor, and Danette Sokacich, Assistant Principal at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS), who is also a Master's candidate in the Northeastern Illinois University Department of Education program in Educational Leadership. The vision of *Proyecto Atabey* involves the recruitment and training of graduates from the program—mothers aged 25-55 who themselves were adolescent parents—to provide monthly presentations and mentorship to current FLC participants where they share their educational, professional, and personal experiences as young mothers and after graduating from the program. Since September 2011, about 12 graduates have returned to discuss their ex-

periences with current students.

The mentoring project hopes to purvey knowledge and skills necessary for parenting students to continue their pursuits in education by providing exemplars of the possibilities of their future. Trying to keep up with the responsibilities of school and family is a formidable task, especially when you are a teenager. This sort of balancing act is an all too familiar routine for young mothers and parents attending the FLC. Over the past 17 years, many mothers have crossed the FLC's threshold, with hopes of achieving their high school diploma and improving their life circumstances, not just for themselves but also for the future of their children. Hundreds of women have graduated from the FLC and have gone on to be successful in a variety of professions, including education, social work, and health-care; many have also transformed their personal lives and made significant changes, such as leaving abusive relationships and becoming more independent.

One such graduate is Maria López, aka "Tata," who graduated from the FLC in 1995. More than 15 years later, she was invited to return to the FLC and share her experiences with current students. Now 50 years old, she gave birth to her first child when she was 19. She enrolled in

the FLC when she was 35 and had her fourth child. She stated that her favorite aspect of being involved in the FLC was "learning [about my] culture" and what "lots of Puerto Ricans go through, especially Pedro Albizu Campos "(who is also the namesake of the high school affiliated with the FLC). She described herself as "not hav[ing] that knowledge" before she attended the FLC. In the years since completing the program, she has enrolled in higher education and served as a drug/addiction counselor for 10 years. Other students who presented included a social worker, child-care teacher, administrative assistant, and dental assistant. A number of students were also enrolled in college and other training programs, and spoke to the challenges of juggling school, work, and family.

Many women also revealed how they had experienced, and overcome, challenges similar to the ones facing current students. For example, Maria shared with young women at the FLC how she changed her life by enrolling in the program. She exuded warmth and energy as she exhorted young women to be resilient and reach their goals. Afterward, when asked what she hoped the young mothers would take away from her session, Maria responded: "just finish what we've started ... even though there were obstacles in our way.

WHO WAS FERD EGGAN? NANCY KURSHAN

Secretary, PACHS Board of Directors



2nd from right, circa 1984



With Marvin Garcia, Principal, circa 1987



Marion Prison demonstration, circa 1980s

Ferd Egan was a teacher and the Assistant Principal of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School from 1979 until 1990. He played a crucial role in the development of the school and felt strongly about its future existence. He loved this community and once said "the fact that

Diagnosed with AIDS in 1986, Ferd was also an activist and a writer, a tireless advocate for people with HIV/AIDS and a founding member of ACT-up Chicago. As an openly gay man, he had a profound impact on the culture of the high school. Earlier in his life, during the 1960s,

thousands of lives. He took the first steps to empower women with HIV; convinced the Republican Mayor to declare a state of emergency to circumvent state law to allow needle exchange programs to work; and created a model for housing that "took into account



PACHS retreat, circa 1987



with student, circa 1984



with Edy Scripps, circa 1980s

they would open the community to let me be part of it, that is something I'm very proud of." Ferd supported Puerto Rican independence and was part of the movement to free the political prisoners and to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques.

Ferd was a civil rights worker in the South, fighting to integrate institutions and registering Black people to vote. Later, as Los Angeles County's AIDS coordinator, his critical innovations changed the face of AIDS in that county, saving

what real oppression does to people through drugs and alcohol" and how a healthy living situation can help people rebuild their lives.

Ferd argued, "We're going to have to take responsibility for each other

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

and I don't just mean gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people taking care of each other. We have a role to play and have always been some of the leaders in pushing for healthcare as something everybody is entitled to. We're human beings

and we want all the things that human beings want and if we just limit ourselves to a few crumbs in the civic arena, then we're not being true to ourselves. . . we can justifiably be proud of ourselves for thinking not just about our rights but how our

rights connect so intrinsically with the way the United States needs to work, or else we won't have a United States. I think we can have a better world and I hope everybody is able to direct their steps in that direction."

Congratulations to Dr Pedro Albizu Campos High School on your 40th Anniversary!



I am proud to say that your community building and educational model has inspired our

work at The Community Youth Development Institute and is an example of building better communities, neighborhoods and households.

Your longevity speaks to the transformational work that impacts individual lives in every aspect of Humboldt Park, economically, socially and educationally making a difference.

Respectfully,
Aaron Royster, Principal
The Community Youth
Development Institute

Congratulations to the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School Family!



I became a part of this family when my daughter, Josette, attended the school. During her time at Albizu Campos, I noticed my daughter grow more confident in her learning and proud of her culture. I am thankful to the school staff and administrators.

As a parent, I have always been involved in my children's education. When Josette attended Albizu Campos, I joined the Board of Directors and became part of the foundation of the school. The school has been very encouraging by making parents feel welcomed and like a valuable partner in the education of all the students. The staff recognizes the importance of having parents be more involved in their children's education.

Catherine Delgado, Parent representative to the Board of Directors

PACHS 40th Anniversary Gala/Reunion

Saturday, January 26, 2013 6-10pm

Location: Northeastern Illinois University Alumni Hall

Free Parking: Lot F

Performance by: Orquesta Sabor

Invited Guest: Rafael Cancel Miranda

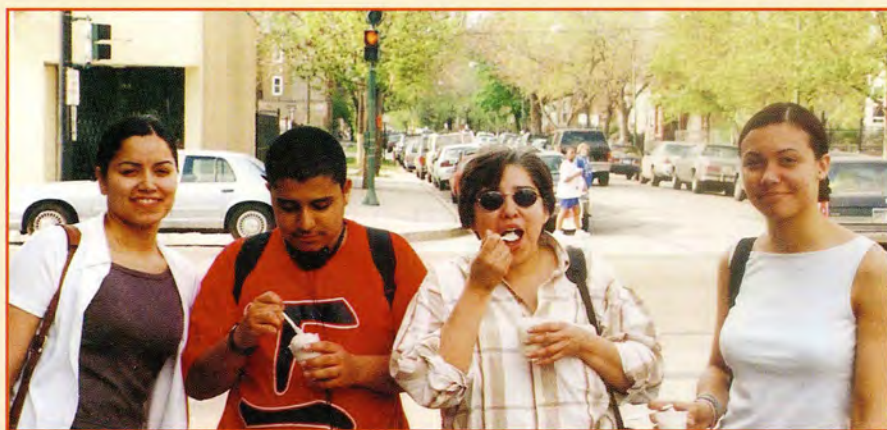
The Gala will:

- Honor our legacy through our founders
 - Recognize our leaders
 - Celebrate our students
 - Feature dinner and dance

DREAMING IN PUERTO RICAN

MICHELLE MORALES

Associate Director, Alternative Schools Network, Treasurer, PACHS Board of Directors
Science Teacher 1997-2002 / Assistant Principal, 2000 – 2002



Circa 2000: l to r: Veronica Crespo -Rich, student, Carmen Abrego, Michelle Morales

Working at the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) saved my life. That sounds dramatic, doesn't it? But it did. It literally made me the leader, person and Puerto Rican woman that I am today. It taught me what it meant to be proud to be Puerto Rican. It taught me about my history, my culture, our heroes. It taught me how to be unwavering, yet flexible; strong, yet compassionate and empathetic. It taught me that strong work, a strong conviction, and a united community can move mountains and make the impossible possible. Working at PACHS taught me about myself, which is so important for personal growth. It taught me my boundaries and how hard I can be pushed. It taught me skills that I did not know I possessed.

Prior to PACHS, I had no real sense of what it meant to be a "proud Puerto Rican". I knew little of our history and culture. I knew nothing of our struggles and our successes. I knew what most Puerto Ricans know, which was what has been pushed upon us by mainstream society. I remember when I stepped off the CTA bus at the corner of Western and Wabansia and walked east to Claremont. I remember seeing the corner of the brick building PACHS used to inhabit on that block. I remember seeing the murals of Puerto Rican flags, Taino and other cultural symbols, portraits of the Political Prisoners. These were things I had never seen painted on any building. To see a building tall, strong, and invincible with murals of my culture and heritage, I knew

immediately that I wanted to work there and be a part of whatever was taking place in that building.

My sense of culture and of community is so strong that I literally believe that Puerto Ricans can do anything. I believe that community is a powerful force to be reckoned with and can change any tide. I believe in the youth of our community, no matter how lost they may appear, because I have seen PACHS transform youth and give youth a path to follow. There needs to be more high schools like PACHS – more high schools that are culturally relevant, more high schools that work side by side with the community where they reside, and more high schools that believe in the power of transformation.

I congratulate PACHS on the celebration of 40 years. I am extremely proud to have been a part of PACHS for the past 16 years and look enthusiastically forward to the next forty. I can only hope that I have made the type of impact on PACHS as it has made on my development.

LA ESCUELITA: HOME IN COMMUNITY

LOURDES LUGO



Lourdes at the age of 16, as a student at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School



Amazing it has been 40 years since the founding of "La Escuelita." This will always be the pet name we have for the space that was more than our school; it became the home to many of the students that benefitted

from its work in our community. I graduated from "La Escuelita" in 1981, and then called Rafael Cancel Miranda, in honor of former incarcerated Puerto Rican Nationalist. I tried to enroll at Roberto Clemente High School, but did not like the crowd; so, I enrolled in the school my uncles Oscar López Rivera and José López helped found and shape in 1972.

I became the Director of "La Escuelita," now Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School,

in 1999. Between my graduation from "La Escuelita" in 1982 to becoming Director, I had been a Teacher, Counselor, and Assistant Director. The tools handed to me at "La Escuelita" allowed me complete the multiple degrees ending with my Master in Arts from National Louis University.

When I separated from "La Escuelita" in 2008, I used all of the lessons the students had taught me, and have been able to continue my work with youth within the framework of "La Escuelita." Without a doubt, who I am today was defined the day I walked through the doors of "La Escuelita." All that is good within me is a direct reflection of both the academic and life lessons learned through my years at "La Escuelita." On its 40th anniversary, I can only thank the founders and those that continue to thrive at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos. They are the reason I have the opportunity to have the life I have today.

ALUMNI WELL-WISHES

Lolita Garcia, Class of 1997



Congratulations to my school that is celebrating its 40th anniversary! Since I was a little

girl, I knew of the Albizu Campos High School because my father was the Director, and my brothers, Armando and Raul, and sister Joanna are all graduates. Even before I attended, I was going to activities; and, sometimes staying overnight and cleaning the school with my father. Even though the school did not have a lot of funds, we had good teachers who wanted us to be successful. I remember the Unity Classes, Friday Groups, the high school retreats and our school bus, called the "Pedro Mobile". But, most of all I remember the special friendships that I made and still have today because the school encouraged us to be a community that learns and helps each other. It has been 15 years since I graduated. I have a beautiful daughter named Melony; and, I still live in the Humboldt Park area. I received my Bachelor's of Arts in Fine Arts with a focus in Interior Design at the International Academy of Design and Technology. I hope to have a business running in the near future. I am currently working at the Northwestern University Feinberg

School of Medicine in the Office of Admissions. I provide incoming medical students with infor-



mation and orientations for their path to become doctors. I also assist the Office of Diversity to support current and incoming minority medical students. I would like to see more Latino students enter this field, but they need to be exposed and encouraged to take high-level science courses. I will be happy to coordinate tours of our medical school for the students of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and I hope to see many of my friends at the Reunion Gala.

Anjela Escobar, Class of 2010

My experience as an Albizu Campos student was like no other. I found a place where an alternative education is an option. Albizu Campos High School is a very friendly, understanding, modern, sociable and non-judgemental place for an untraditional high

school experience with high expectations connected to the state standards. With small class sizes and limited enrollment, Albizu Campos helped me understand the importance of community and unity among peers, along with a new perspective on education.

This culturally relevant school help me become more creative with my education; and, my future career goals. The Senior Portfolio course, an alternative performance assessment for the graduation benchmark, at Albizu Campos definitely helped get me college ready. I never thought college would be an option for me, but thanks to this school I am a successful college student today.

The school offered a variety of creative classes and countless support from the entire staff and faculty. The Lolita Lebron Family Learning Center at the school, of which I was a participant, helped me understand that being a teenage mom should not cause shame. However, it gave me focus on larger goals in my education and to look forward. Not only did I graduate as Valedictorian of the Class of 2010, but Albizu Campos shaped my academic persona in order to transition to the successful NEIU student that I have become.



"Education Breaks Chains"

Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican

Founders



Rafael
Cancel
Miranda

High School

40th
1972-2012
anniversary

**Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos
High School
40th Anniversary
Celebration
1972-2012**

Dr. Bill Ayres – Convenor

Honorary Committee

Dr. Victoria MacDonald

Dr. Ana Yolanda Ramos

Dr. Sonia Nieto

Dr. Merida Rua

Dr. Christine Clark

Dr. Carmen Mercado

Dr. Jennifer Ayala

Dr. Rick Ayers

Dr. Ann Bishop

Dr. Dan Grego

Dr. Matt Hern

Dr. Rene Antrop-González

Dr. Pedro Noguera

Host Committee

Dr. Margaret Power

Dr. Maureen Gillette

Dr. Victoria Chou

Dr. John Fritsche

Dr. Elizabeth Ortiz

Howard Rosing

Dr. Kevin Kumashiro

Dr. Tom Heaney

Dr. Teresa Cordova

Dr. Laura Ruth Johnson

Dr. Erica Mieners

Dr. Brian Schultz

Jesse Mumm

Mary Scott Boria

Myra Chacon

Madeline Roman-Vargas

INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS

Northeastern Illinois University,
College of Education
University of Illinois Chicago, Col-
lege of Education
Illinois College, Department of
Education
DePaul University, Office of Institu-
tional Diversity and Equity
CARMEN Fund
Schott Foundation For Public Edu-
cation
Alternative Schools Network of
Chicago
Youth Connection Charter School
Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican
Cultural Center

*Special thanks to Institute of Puerto
Rican Arts and Culture for hosting the
40th anniversary committee meet-
ings*

Individual and Business Donors

CONSUELO LEE CORRETIER \$2,500

Dr. Margaret Power

Dr. Ann Bishop

Marvin Garcia

JUAN ANTONIO CORRETIER \$1,500

Charles K. MacDonald

Dr. María Victoria MacDonald

LOLITA LEBRÓN \$500

Dr. Ana Yolanda Ramos-Zayas

Dr. Christie Clark

Evelyn Rivera-Swint

Carmen Vásquez

CUCA

Lourdes Lugo

Roberto Caldero

ANDRES FIGUEROA CORDERO \$250

Dr. Sonia Nieto

Mike Oquendo

Douglas Spalding

Miguel Méndez
Tim Swint
Carmen Mercado
Dr. Bill Ayres
Miguel Arroyo
Harold Rice
Dr. Merida Rua
Dr. Maureen Gillette
Anja Staten
Tony Adams
Elias Carmona
Edgar Torres
Goya
Costco
Municipal Food
Central Park Produce

**Thank you for your support over
the years**

U.S. Congressman:
Honorable Luis Gutiérrez

Illinois State Senators:
Honorable William "Willie" Delgado
Honorable Iris Martinez

State Representatives:
Honorable Cynthia Soto
Honorable Antonia "Toni" Berrios

Alderman:
Honorable Roberto Maldonado
Honorable Joe "Proco" Moreno

County Commissioner:
Honorable Edwin Reyes

Special Thanks to:
Billy Ocasio, Illinois Governor's
Office

Somos Fruto de Nuestro Ayer

We Are the Fruit of Our Past Generations
Sowing Seeds of Liberation Through Within
Chicago's Puerto Rican Community

Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School 40th Anniversary Gala/Reunion

6:00 pm Reception

6:45 pm Dinner

7:30 pm Program

Welcome – Matt Rodriguez, Principal

In Memoriam of Irma Romero
Michelle Morales, Board of Directors, PACHS

Ferd Eggan Social Ecology Endowment Fund
Marvin Garcia, Board of Directors, PACHS

Special Recognition of Alumni and Staff
Lourdes Lugo, Operations Director of Vida/SIDA

Presentation of Honored Guest
José E. López, Executive Director, PRCC

Honored Guest and Inspirational Message
Rafael Cancel Miranda

Recognition of Founders – Michelle Morales
Closing Remarks – Matt Rodríguez

8:30 Entertainment
Willie Garcia y su Orquesta Sabor
DJ OCD

The Ferd Eggan Foundation

Donors List



Victoria Becker
Diana Block
Henry Bortman
Russell Brinkman
Scott Brinkman
China Brotsky
Bill Crossman
Arawn Eibhlyn
Howard Emmer
Darlene Gramigna
Rene Heybach
Jeanne Kracher
Nancy Kurshan
William Lamme
Bob Lederer
Vicki Legion
Claude Marks
Laura McAlpine
Rob McBride
Nancy Mikelsons
Shelly Miller
Judith Mirkinson
Michael Novick
Mary Patten
Katheryn Raphael
John Riley
Dan Roth
Lisa Roth
Robert Roth
Edy Scripps
Jane Segal
Robin Semer
Alan Shafer
Karen Shain
Jody Sokolower
Doug Spalding
Mic Sweny
Robert Wells?
Donna Willmott
Steve Whitman
Barbara Zeller



A FEW HOURS A WEEK...

MIKE HANNAN

Director of Program Development, Alternative Schools Network



At 1671 N. Claremont building, circa 1995

I first came to La Escuelita in 1989 after meeting the co-director Ferd Eggan at Columbia College. Come by and volunteer for a few hours a week, he told me, at this school built by the Puerto Rican community to develop self-determination—to romper las cadenas of colonialism. The suggestion seemed simple enough—drop by a school and help students increase their fluency. I did not know how this tiny community school would draw me into a world of community struggle, of pasteles at Christmas and alcapurrias from the corner store on a Friday afternoon, pickets and poetry, bombazos and dialogues, una casita y quesitos ricos on Division, gentrification and colonization, building community and tearing down barriers. In Unity for Social Analysis, students and teachers led discussions

about the issues of the day—from big ideas like racism or immigration to immediate concerns like addressing bochinche (gossip) and practical “how-tos” such as finding a job or filling out college applications. In Unity, poets, historians, activist, and storytellers took their places on the floor. I learned about young people’s lives in Chicago, in Mexico, in Puerto Rico. Sometimes, we witnessed the tragedy of talents unrealized and dreams unfulfilled, but we also saw young people develop consciousness of their own struggles for justice. I marveled at their power as they overcame loss, unearthed their talents, and resisted the school-to-prison pipeline. We saw the impact of gentrification and I remember students and teachers loading vans with books, furniture, beakers and computers, to move the school from Claremont to Division. Pulling away, we marveled at a tiny wood frame house across the alley rumored to sell for what seemed an impossible sum of a half million dollars. The students had been coming from greater distances each year, yet it almost seemed as though the school’s community had moved away in the middle of the night.



At NBHRN Pancake breakfast, circa 2005

On Paseo Boricua the school continues its legacy of community building, preserving un pedazo de la patria. The statue of Don Pedro found its home at La Casita, built and landscaped by volunteers—high school students and community members. As the school celebrates 40 years of sowing seeds of liberation through education, we will pause to remember those who have contributed. The list is so long, but it is impossible not to mention Irma Romero whose presence on Division Street seemed eternal in life, and may yet be eternal in memory. I came to give a few hours of my time, but Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School has given me a lifetime of lessons about life, culture, race, politics, and education and the meaning of self-determination for young people of color growing up in a world that seems stacked against them.

ALBIZU CAMPOS STUDENTS WRITE TO OSCAR LÓPEZ RIVERA & WELL-WISHERS

Current PACHS Student

Dear Oscar López Rivera,
Before I came to Albizu Campos High School, I did not know much about you and all you have done. I learned that you are the longest held political prisoner and how unfair this situation is. Learning about you, I realized how strong of a person you are. I learned about your accomplishments and you motivate me to never give up. You have taught me that my voice and my opinion matter. I learned, from you, that I should never let someone break me and to stand up for what I believe in. I'm happy I found this school. I feel right at home here and this school has taught me so much not just about academics but about myself, too. I wish that they will send you home soon, where you belong. I wish they would let you out so you can come see how far Albizu Campos has come and how much you have been missed.

Current PACHS Student

Trapped within four walls 4X6, splattered with white a bunk and a mattress, you'll be lucky to have sheets

A toilet which is the sink A human confinement living misery You ask, what keeps me strong? Hope The fight, to show that what they're doing To me is not right. Reason Truth Puerto Ricans Independence Life History Understanding I have a purpose Understanding myself Finding me I know how you feel...:

Current PACHS Student

Dear Oscar,
This year is my first year attending Albizu Campos High School. The main reason why I am attending this school is because they gave me a second chance in life to finish my education. No other school can compare. Before I came to Albizu Campos High School, I failed my classes. Now I am proud to be attending this school because I have learned that I need to have a goal in mind and be able to accomplish them. I am thankful you took the time to help establish the school. I have learned so much about Puerto Rican history. I may not be Puerto Rican, but by your belief in your people's independence, you created a lot in our community. Now it is

our home. It is hope. A place where everyday, we are thankful for your courage and valor. In my mind and heart, you will always be remembered with a great love. The hope you provide us, cannot be lost. May God bless you and our community.

Current PACHS Student

Dear Oscar,
This letter is from a student enrolled in Pedro Albizu Campos High School. I write to say I support your cause, you and your party to fight for Puerto Rican independence. I am African-American and Puerto Rican. I hold pride with both of my nationalities, and you are a part of my history. I write to say your cause is not forgotten, your fight is not over because we, the students and staff of my school, plan to fight and keep your beliefs and your dreams alive.

Current PACHS Student

Dear Oscar López Rivera,
During the holidays, I want to take the time to express my love for you. I am glad to hear there is someone fighting for others and won't give up. To be honest, we need more

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

people like you in this world. I sort of feel your pain while being behind bars because I have been in the system. I also spent many holidays behind bars. It made me depressed. I just wanted to elude out of that place. We at least have something in common. We are both stuck in this messed up system, but we are different because you are fighting for a good cause, for your people. I was fighting for the crowd, a group of cowards that said they had my back. As soon as I pulled the trigger, they were quick to give me up. I should've seen it coming, but I was blind. They pulled a ghost move and when I was incarcerated, they forgot all about me. No calls, no letters, no visits, No LOVE! But I am lucky enough to have a family that has never left my side. Mr. López, I admire you a lot. I now know and understand that the hood will not take me anywhere, but behind bricked, lonely, cold walls. Now I'm ready for change, Mr. López. I'm tired of causing my loved ones pain. I want to be a better person. I want to be the first one to graduate high school in my family. I want to take my family out of poverty. I come from a single parent home. My father is incarcerated as well, he is in jeopardy of being deported to México. I'm confused, sad and lonely. Mr. Lopez, I understand you have your problems, but I am asking for a bit of advice because I know you have experi-

enced many problems in your past. Mr. Lopez, I will be sending you letters often. I know it isn't much, but I know one letter means a lot to someone held in custody. Keep your head up, Mr. López. You will be out one day; they cannot hold you forever. Everyone has a day out.

Current PACHS Student

Dear Oscar López Rivera,
I am a student at Campos. Before coming to Campos HS, I did not really use my "voice". Now that I'm here, I never stop talking. I'm glad I found this school, because if it wasn't for this school, I would not have a second chance at an education. Even though I am young, I know I have a voice because of you. I want to get to know you more and about your situation. I dedicate this poem to you:

Ode to Oscar

*I don't hear an echo.
Silence in the air.
I'm standing in an empty room feeling silent stares.
My beliefs don't really matter to anyone but me.
Not much a kid can do to change the world,
I mean, I'm only 17.
Me and you are similar
We are trapped and locked away
Only four walls to get us
through the day*

*The feeling of being forgotten,
The only thing I want is to feel
wanted*

*You are the voice for kids just like me
Who think their little whimpers don't
mean anything*

*The challenges you're facing give us
all strength*

*And every single day there's new
challenges in our face*

*From gangs, to families, from school
to drugs*

*You ask someone what they believe
and all they do is shrug.*

I'm glad I have you

To share something in common

And for once a girl at 17

Can finally feel wanted

*You showed us that each of us all
have a voice*

By each of us, only if by choice.

Current PACHS Student

Dear Oscar López,
I am amazed at the time you have been in prison, but I value your courage to stick up for what you believe in, even if it had an unpleasant consequence. I think it is cruel, and they say we have "freedom of speech" in the U.S. Why would they incarcerate you, when all you did was speak your mind? I have learned how to see life in a different way, like now I know not to take life for granted. Everyone talks about you, all of Humboldt Park has something about you, like big signs and pictures, especially the school.

Que Ondee Sola

I admire your drawings, they are wonderful. When they made a fake cell for your 31st anniversary of being in prison, I went to visit your sister Zenaida, who I have a very close bond with. I only visited her there, but I just couldn't imagine living like that. You are a role model in my eyes, and you inspire myself and many others. Maybe, when I grow up (in age and height), I will make sure justice is served for you and for others. The U.S. will change. Hope you keep your head up.

P.S. How awesome, I am writing to you, and it is 12/12/12. This is the last time we will see this, until another thousand years :)

Current PACHS Student

Dear Oscar López,
During the holidays, I want to take the time to express my deepest condolences to you and your family. I understand your situation and you have inspired me. Before I came to Albizu Campos, I used to struggle a lot with finding myself. I left school and gave up. Now I have fessed up to my responsibilities and realized that I have a second chance. This school has helped me learn that I am the master of my abilities. I have learned how to take my life seriously. I have participated in community activities. Take these words as hope, "it gets greater later." I am thankful you took the time to

establish our school because you have shown me what it is to have a second chance. My best memory of Albizu Campos was when I first had a chat with the principal Matthew. I wish you much luck and wish you can come home.

Current PACHS Student

Buenos Días. Hola, ¿Cómo estás? It is an honor to write to you, Mr. Oscar López Rivera. I am a believer in your fight for Puerto Rico. Me and you both know my people back in the day struggled to eat lunch in a decent restaurant. This school, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, has allowed me to experience new culture, food, and most of all a second chance. During the glorious holidays, I wish you the best of home and a heart-warming spirit! You are in my prayers. I believe that God has a huge blessing in store for you!

P.S. Although we are of different ethnicities, there is a hint of Boricua in me! Hasta luego mi amigo. Where there is peace, there is power!

Alumni Quotes

"Like a beacon of hope among the darkness, Albizu broke my chains and created an artist"
-Casandra Figueroa

"In many ways, Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) was pivotal to my development as a student and person. It has helped shape my thoughts and ideas in not only living in a more just and free world, being part of that exact transformation. In addition, PACHS provided me with a very strong educational foundation for me to continue on with my studies, and welcomed me to explore a world filled with possibility, hope, and change. "Live and help to live". "
-Juan 'Nito' Morales

"Albizu Campos High School not only saved my life, but it gave my life meaning. This high school produced an activist that will forever fight for justice."
-Jessie Fuentes

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

EDITORIAL...FROM PAGE 2



true to its precepts, which the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire articulated in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In this issue you will find reflections of this incredible educational experiment from scholars, students, teachers, administrators, community activists, and founders of the school. From these the reader will be able to surmise how the

school has engaged students and community in a Freirian "dialogical" process. Its innovative vision projects into the future an education premised on a holistic approach, based on a social ecology model, in a school that has indeed served as a "sanctuary" for generations of our youth.

emergent program in urban agriculture—which speak to the future of any educational model. Without a doubt, Pedro Albizu Campos High School has remained

A HISTORICAL REFLECTION OF A PRACTITIONER...

be changed even if they did not finish the program or just visited for a day.

My life was changed in 1974 when I joined hundreds of activists who gathered at the school to board coach busses headed to the Madison Square Garden in New York to participate in the largest gathering ever in support of Puerto Rican Independence and the freedom for the political prisoners, Lolita Lebrón, Irving Flores, Oscar Collazo, Andrés Figueroa Cordero and Rafael Cancel Miranda. Participating in this historical event set in motion a desire to learn more about the colonial status of Puerto Rico and its socio-economic impact of my people living in the diaspora.

In sum, I became a teacher, a learner, and a leader at Dr Pedro Albizu Campos High School. I have seen the school grow, not just in size but also in its quality of instruction and its commitment to serve students, families, and the community. It was never easy; the process is rife with struggle, contradictions, pain and joy. I thank all who have been part of this historical process and I salute the current staff led by Principal, Matthew Rodríguez as they lead with us the work of the next 40 years.

Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School 40th Anniversary Planning Committee

PACHS Staff

Matthew Rodriguez
Juanita Garcia
Judy Diaz
Meredith Rodriguez
Jason Gaya
Viola Salgado
Migdalia Tinsley
Danette Sokacich
Ariana Anaya
Evelyn Rivera

PACHS Students

Joel Anaya
Amanda Villaronga
PANA Council Members

PACHS Board

Michelle Morales
Veronica Crespo Rich
Nancy Kurshan
Catherine Delgado

University Student Representatives

Alyssa Villegas - NEIU
Matt McCanna - Columbia College
Manuel Jimenez - UIC
PRCC Representatives
José E. López
Alejandro Luis Molina

Volunteer

Laura Ann Madden

Alumni

Jessica Fuentes • Casandra Figueroa
Ada Rivera • Edgar Delgado

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DANETTE SOKACICH AND JUANITA GARCÍA

Director, Lolita Lebrón Family Learning Center Humboldt Park No Se Vende

The tenets of the mission and vision of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School are self-actualization, self-determination, and self-reliance, which are practiced as a force of social transformation through collaboration in the Puerto Rican community of Paseo Boricua to serve as a model of civic engagement. Engaging youth in the construction of civic engagement activities provides students with opportunities to explore and observe their actions and to create a positive impact on the community. Community building activities are evidenced in the various festivals supported by Albizu Campos students, which include Barrio Arts Fest, Desfile Invernal del Día de Los Reyes Magos (Three Kings Day Parade and Gift Giving), Fiesta Boricua, and many others. Events, such as Haunted Paseo Boricua, rely on student leadership, organization, planning, and facilitation. Through their engagement, students demonstrate a learning of their potential as active community members.

The spirit of civic engagement can be seen through the activism of



students. Despite the generalized classification of “at risk youth”, “drop outs”, or “alternative education”, Albizu Campos and its students are often called upon to represent the voice of disenfranchised youth and the importance of culturally relevant and pedagogically critical education. This same idealism was the focus of the school’s founders, Oscar López Rivera, Carlos Alberto Torres, and others, who believed traditional education practices and curriculum were not inclusive of the lived realities of Puerto Rican, other Latina/os, and African Americans. Students learn about the foundations of activism through Unity for Social Analysis and other programming that highlight awareness and advocacy. Students have served on panel discussions with elected officials to discuss the issues of re-

enrolled students, lobbied to continue funding for progressive education, demonstrated to eradicate bias and stereotypes of marginalized communities, and advocated for the release of Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Oscar López Rivera.

Civic engagement stands at the core of the founding of the school as the activist spirit demonstrated by the founders creates a space for youth to learn about their legacies, decide the destiny of their community, and envision a future that diffuses restraints of colonialism to enact change. Albizu Campos is a unique haven that practices civic engagement through a lens of transformation for youth to become agents of change. The vision of the founders still resonates with the students: With self-actualization, self-determination, and self-reliance at the core of civic engagement, the students will continue to empower themselves and their future. With self-actualization, self-determination, and self-reliance at the core of civic engagement, the students will continue to empower themselves and their future.

Yo recuerdo a Irma...

Alejandrina Torres

La noticia del fallecimiento de mi querida hermana Irma me dolió hasta las entrañas.

La creía invencible. Desde que la conocí en una manifestación en apoyo a que el hospital Cook County se mantuviera abierto para la comunidad, hasta la última vez que la vi en su carro móvil en camino a quien sabe si la escuela, o una reunión. Esa era su vida, una vida siempre en movimiento. Si bien me acuerdo, nunca la oí quejarse. Y digo esto porque de una de esas congeladas manifestaciones del estudiantado palestino en el downtown de Chicago que solíamos asistir, me entere al otro día que había dado a luz a su hijo Urayoan.

Como no sentir la partida de Irma —aun cuando sé que se ha ganado la gloria. Se va a extrañar profundamente la gran madre (no solo con sus hijos sino también con las mías). Se va a extrañar la gran activista comunitaria, la luchadora incansable, la gran compañera de luchas, retos, maldades, tropiezos y victorias que junto a ella vivimos.

Todavía se me hace difícil creer que se nos ha ido. Y aunque vamos a extrañar su tan visible y palpable presencia, su espíritu, y su compromiso vivirá en nuestros corazones y en nuestras historias de lucha.

No te digo adiós mi querida hermana y compañera. Te digo hasta siempre. Y aquí nos quedamos hasta la victoria con nuestro querido compañero Oscar.





Viola Salgado

Irma Romero lived her life with a passion of love and support for social justice, independence for Puerto Rico and the political prisoners. We met in 1977 where we worked together to organize support

against Chicago Police abuse in Humboldt Park. By 1980, we both worked at the law office, a project of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) where among many duties we collaborated with lawyers with the defense for a variety of clients.

Irma's ubiquitous passion for justice amplified with the arrest of the 11 Puerto Rican political activists charged with being members of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN). Irma visited the prisoners, wrote letters, and for many years to come she organized religious support for the Prisoners of Conscience among many churches and people of faith. Since I met Irma she always held a very strong devotion and dedication to struggle for social justice causes and support for the Prisoners of Conscience. About 20 years ago, Irma faced cancer but she did not let that stop her community commitments. Irma continued to support all causes, including attending marches, demonstrations, rallies and activities in her wheelchair. Personally to me Irma became an older sister, we became an extended family, Her children and mine grew up together, we shared our personal lives, both happy and sad times. Irma and her family were ever present for me during my mother's death, children's birthdays and graduations, picnics and family celebrations.

Gracias IRMA ROMERO por todo tu amor y apoyo para mi y familia.

IRMA de TAMAULIPAS

por Eduardo Arocho

*Un Cinco de Mayo después de marchar hasta
el capitolio del imperio
nació una niña en Tamaulipas, pidiendo justicia
para los trabajadores,
pidiendo libertad para los Puertorriqueños.
En la tierra de Tonantzin
Su padre zapatero
(toro herido por el matador)
le hizo a su hija un par de zapatos,
hechos de henequén
y con la familia en la espalda
anda hija de Tamaulipas
norte pal norte
con zapatos de henequén
Baila Irma de Tamaulipas
con un bastón por la metrópolis fría
recuerdos de Puerto Tampico
y de bailes con Cortijo y Rafael Hernández
que trajeron los marineros Boricuas.
Anda hija de Tamaulipas
Guadalupe protege a esa trabajadora que marcha
por el camino precario del imperio
luchando como Young Lord
luchando como enfermera
luchando como estudiante
luchando como maestra
Como madre, como abuela
armada con instintos Yungüicos
que mantienen cinturas afro mestizas
moviéndose en bailes
junto a tambores dentro de los palenque.
Anda hija de Tamaulipas, después de medio siglo
su cuerpo cansado de cáncer
Después de caerse de una carroza vestida de vejigante
Sufre un reemplazo de cadera
Pero todavía sigue pa'lante en silla de ruedas
Por las calles de Chicago su voz gritando
contra cualquier injusticia
Defensora de su pueblo querido
Nada le detiene los pasos
a Irma de Tamaulipas*



Irma, her sons Ulises and Urayoan, visiting Puerto Rican political prisoner Adolfo Matos Antongiorgi, circa 1984

Oscar López Rivera

My memories of compañera Irma and how I want to remember her without ever forgetting the Amazona she was. Reading the e-mail informing me that Irma had passed away wasn't the news I was expecting and much less that I wanted to read about. I've known the compañera since the time that the Young Lord's were occupying the church on Armitage. What I remember

most was that whenever I would see her, she was always working. After the Young Lords



Irma, Josefina "Fifo" Rodriguez, Rev. Mike Yasutake, Rev. José Alberto "Viejo" Torres, and Joan

Organization left the church, the next time I saw her working was when CASA was being set up in the Pilsen community. I had been working with some of the compas from Pilsen, and they had asked me if

I could help with the cleanup of the storefront where CASA was to be located. I spent a few days helping. She was there working as usual. I remember when she got the house from Bickerdike - that was before seeing her at CASA. Able Construction had built the house and the NCO staff went there for the opening of the house at 1731 N. Washtenaw. I know photos were taken, but where they ended up I have no idea. It would have been great to have photos of her on that particular day. One day, Felipe Gutiérrez took me to a little get together they were having at

Irma's house. After that, I didn't see her for many years. It surprised me when I found out she had been actively involved with the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center for years.

During the years I've been in prison, she visited me several times. It

was always a joyful encounter. We could reminisce about activities and places we had been together at the same time and had never spoken to each other. For example, she couldn't remember that the steam heaters that were set up at CASA came from the building on Haddon and Hoyne. We had decided to put space heaters in that building. Since we had no use for the steam heaters, we took some to CASA because the place didn't have good heat. As a matter of fact, she couldn't remember me helping with the cleanup. She did remember the names of the Puerto Ricans who were fraternal with CASA. The thing is that none of those Puerto Ricans were there when the cleanup was taking place. One thing that she would always say during visits or when we talked on the phone was that she was going to try to stay alive in order to see me come out of prison. That was a comment she started making once she survived the first and then the second battle with cancer. Unfortunately, her dream didn't materialize.

Because she was a fighter, I named her the Amazona. For me she was a true Amazona. In my mind, the most vivid image I have of her was of her doing things. That's how I want to remember the Amazona. Always working, always supporting, always-in acts of solidarity.



Irma upon graduation with her Ms



Irma's degree from NEIU

Luis Rosa Pérez

It would appear a contradiction that one can obtain inner peace while one is in constant struggle. However, it is within this process of struggle, the struggle for justice and the well-being

of your neighbor where you internalize your responsibility to



Irma and the rest of the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School Board of Directors

humanity and reach that place of harmony and inner peace. Irma, with all her ailments and pains; Irma pregnant and ready for birth; Irma, the grieving widow; Irma, in her wheelchair; the discriminated Mexican; the oppressed and colonized independentista is the same Irma with her peasant hat that loved us all. She did not complain. She protested and struggled with the same passion, as she loved her community. She loved with

the same consistency in which she defended the rights of others.

She loved intensely. There was no rest. There was no retreat. She did not tire nor was she regretful. The corridors had to be wheelchair accessible. Her streets had to have ramps. The sermons and speeches had to be sensitive to the needs of her community.

This she demanded and the political prisoners who received most of her attention needed to be brought home.

We will miss your embrace and kisses – your rides

through the neighborhood. We will miss you, and all you represented for the power of solidarity, is that at any given moment you become one with those you are in need. You are as much Azteca as you are Boricua. As much a revolutionary as you are a missionary of peace. There is no contradiction. Peace – your inner peace – could've only been found in a life of constant struggle. Now, we are faced to continue the march with one



Irma at a demonstration for Alejandrina Torres, circa 1987

less shoulder; to continue the struggle to feel you in every smile – to hear you in every discourse. Struggle to see you reborn in every embrace and kiss and multiplied in every child. We will struggle to become free and better human beings and reach that peace you exemplified.

You were persistent yet patient. You listened to others and spoke effectively when needed. You accepted leadership and lead us. These traits, which appear unattainable to most, you unselfishly possessed. You were the example of Ché Guevarra's "new woman." We will continue to struggle so as to pay you the homage you deserve in all our work. We will bring Oscar home and free Puerto Rico. We will continue to struggle so as to love you more... to always love and remember you – our beloved Comrade Irma.





*40th years of the staff & students of
Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto
Rican High School*

FROM THE DIASPORA TO THE HOMELAND: CREATING A DECOLONIZING AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULUM

BRENDA TORRES FIGUEROA

Art Teacher, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School



The transition of people from the Island of Puerto Rico during the last six decades has shaped and challenged the cultural web of the United States. Struggle and resistance have shaped the identity of many Puerto Ricans. An identity defined by a resistance to assimilation and the lack of access to education, health care inequalities, and the rapid shift of the workforce that started to limit the once available opportunities. Allowing violence, gentrification, the dropout rate among youth, the detrimental living conditions and the oppressive authorities has taken a harmful toll in the self-determination of Puerto Ricans, collectively and individually.

Despite the circumstances, fierce community members have been able to sustain a ground for the cultural preservation and growth

of Puerto Ricans in Chicago and by creating organizations and sponsoring businesses and schools. Humboldt Park, a “Boricua” haven, constitutes the heart of our homeland thousands of miles away. This haven embraced by the two biggest flags in the world, serves to keep us grounded and determined that “mis hermanas y hermanos” deserve to be free, educated, and to find self-determination.

We are responsible as educators to acknowledge these realities and to engage in dialogues with our students, community members, and colleagues that disable colonization and its growth among this generation and beyond. Understanding one’s identity and the possibilities of transformation cannot be established by a set of weeklong lessons. It is living by example and ensuring as community members that we are learning and progressing ourselves, while serving the growth of our community and our school.

Since the creation of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS),



the school has embraced a critical approach to the educational experiences of our youth. Taking in consideration the academic, social, and emotional needs of our community and distinct student population, PACHS approaches education by linking education to the individual needs of our students and empowering them to become active participants in creating change at a global, local, and personal level. Our curriculum has been masterfully designed to celebrate the Puerto Rican culture and the positive implications of being self-determined and self-actualized by reconnecting and learning about their heritage and cultural identity. For this reason, our school will continue to challenge and educate our students and community and breaking the chains of oppression.

LIVING, BREATHING SOLIDARITY

JESSE MUMM

Adjunct Professor, Northeastern Illinois University

I walked into Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School at age 21, practically a child, full of theories about free-schooling and liberatory education, and terrified daily of my first year teaching English. This institution took a bright, yet unstable, young white boy from Logan Square and grounded him to community. I gave Albizu Campos my twenties and got back infinity.

It was total immersion in a totality: self-determination in principle, constant reinvention of curriculum in practice, and all the horrors, victories, pettiness, tears, and joys of the daily lives of our students. We were pressed for time, strapped for resources, and I was almost always exhausted but the foundation there was love, and our love hung firmly onto the vision of a free Puerto Rico. The relentless FBI harassment and attacks we endured left me with a certainty about where we are in this society and what must be done to keep this space. In moving, poignant verse erupting from my students, critical discussions pushing the envelopes enwrapping them, they challenged and changed their teacher



along the way. I look back in longing at our late nineties crew—Marvin, Lourdes, the two Mikes, Veronica and Michelle—and think I have never been part of a team so solid, so committed, so righteous in any work before or since.

Albizu Campos was where I learned the meaning of solidarity, a difficult, often unknowable, dance that can be beautiful, rewarding, and painful, and there it became embodied in my mind, heart, sweat, and bones. Because I could never represent the Puerto Rican High School, I became instead its advocate, its promoter, its defender, and its liaison to a wider world of alternative and community schools around the country and in Japan, Ukraine, England and Palestine. From Albizu Campos, I chaired the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, as we expanded to

include more Latina/os, black, and urban schools. I saw then how intimately the meaning of freedom for any community is revealed by its history, its political and economic position, and the experience of race.

My immersion in the Puerto Rican literary and practical reality sent me on a quest to grasp my own Irish ancestry, which led to a yearlong project in Ireland, where Albizu Campos students and teachers joined me to tour Derry, Galway, and Dublin. I ached to stop and reflect, to collect life stories, to examine political economy, culture, and community, and so Albizu Campos ultimately led to my research on gentrification and race in Chicago. This institution is the reason I am a better teacher of anthropology now at Northeastern Illinois University. I have enormous respect for the dynamic team around Matt, Judy, and Juanita as they create, innovate, and expand its repertoires. For what this school does and means, for its people and its vision, I still say: Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos is the BEST SCHOOL I have ever known.

Carlos Alberto Torres



Carlos Alberto Torres, 58, is one of the founders of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, formerly known as Rafael Cancel Miranda Puerto Rican High School. The son of Rev. José Alberto "Viejo" Torres, a well-known civil rights activist, Carlos was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico from which he emigrated with his family first to New York and then Chicago. In Chicago, he became involved in the student-community movement at the University of Illinois, protesting the racist theories of Shockley and the lack of community access to the university, at all levels.

In 1976, he went underground, avoiding the U.S. government's intense repression against the Puerto Rican independence movement which led to him becoming No. 1 on the FBI's Most Wanted List. Alberto Torres was arrested in 1980 with 10 other compañeros, one being Alfredo Mendez, who went on to become State's Witness. The prisoners were tried and convicted on charges of seditious conspiracy among lesser charges. Adopting the position of "Prisoner of War", they offered no legal defense and were given sentences ranging from 68-105 years. The majority of the prisoners were freed in 1999 by President Clinton after a world-wide campaign calling for their freedom. Carlos served 30 years before being paroled in 2010. He became a master ceramics artist in prison and recently opened up a studio in Puerto Rico. His work is available at www.cemiceramica.com.

Standing in the greenhouse of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, I'm blown away by the beauty surrounding me, and the idea that this is part of the Puerto Rican High School. A high school that started 40 years ago, a high school that started in the basement of a Presbyterian Church, a high school that's founded by community, educators, activists, and parents who felt that there were certain conditions and an immediate need to create the space. It's a great jump from the basement to where we are today. To answer the questions, "Is it still relevant today? Do we still have a need for the Puerto Rican High School?" we need to critically think about the conditions that motivated us 40 years

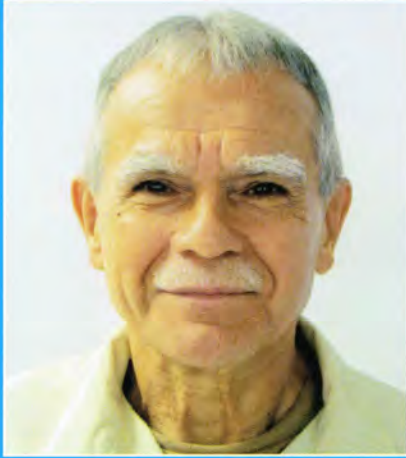


With PACHS art class during recent visit, November 2012

ago to create the high school. I would suggest we look at the educational situation in our community today and realize that yes, Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School is absolutely necessary today. Those needs for this school are still present. When I come to the modern Puerto Rican High School 40 years later and look at the great piece of artwork, "Albizu Sembrador", I feel that it speaks to the philosophy we had when founding the school. It wasn't just because we wanted to teach Pedro how to add but about the future of the community. The school is not just a center but it is a place where you sow seeds for the future, for our children, for our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren. It also speaks to what we want to happen in the future and why we created the high school. We are thinking about the immediate moment while still being future oriented.

LUCHA Y RESISTENCIA: THE FOUNDATIONS OF A LEGACY

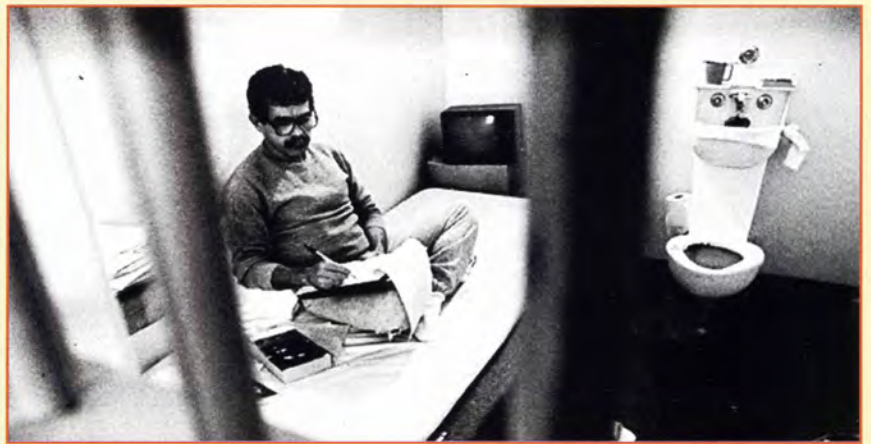
**Oscar López
Rivera**



Oscar López Rivera, one of the founders of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, was born in San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, to María Andrea "Mita." At age 14, he emigrated to Chicago with his eldest sister Clary and her husband Isidro. There he became acutely aware of the racism and repression against Puerto Ricans and other Latinos. After attending public schools, he was drafted into the Army and sent to fight in Vietnam, returning in 1967 with a Bronze Star for "meritorious achievement in ground operations against hostile forces."

On his return to Chicago, he became involved in organizing around community issues such as housing, jobs, police brutality and education, helping to found an alternative high school for Puerto Rican youth, which is now the thriving Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School. In 1976, due to intense government repression, he went underground with Ida Luz Rodríguez, Carlos Alberto Torres and Haydée Beltrán, as the FBI conducted a dragnet in the Puerto Rican community. He was arrested in 1981 and convicted of seditious conspiracy, and in 1987 of a government sting operation. Serving a

If we were to tell some of PACHS founding members that at this moment the high school is celebrating its 40th anniversary, I would dare to aver that the vast majority would not believe it. Because the challenges we faced to organize it and make it a reality for many years seemed insurmountable. In order to start the school we needed to secure a place to house it; to recruit teachers, students, tutors and parents; to obtain the most basic supplies, materials and equipment; to get its accreditation; and to raise the necessary funds.



It took us over a year to open up the school with a shoe-string budget, a very small amount of materials and equipment to meet the most basic needs, with the accreditation from St. Mary's High School and with a motley crew of teachers, tutors, students and parents. Within the first year, we continued facing enormous challenges. The church where the school was located notified us we had to move by the end of the year. The board of directors experienced a difficult split, which caused us to lose valuable human resources, who had badly needed skills. On the bright side, we had been able to secure a small grant from a foundation and a larger one from the Hispanic Commission of the Episcopal Church.

At first we thought we had a solution to the problem of having a new place for the school. We had purchased a burnt out building and had repaired it. However, as soon as the neighbors found out we were going to use it for the school, they made their move, and we were not able to move there. We were fortunate enough to enter an agreement with St. Aloysius Church. Its school building was vacant, and we were able to rent it. The big problem became the issue of raising the money to pay for the

La Educación Rompe Las Cadenas

sentence of 70 years, he was held in the two most punitive control unit prisons in the U.S. for more than 12 years — USP Marion and ADX Florence — under torturous conditions of isolation and sensory deprivation.

Most of his compatriots arrested in 1980 and 1983 were released in 1999 by President Clinton after a world-wide campaign calling for their freedom; the others were released on parole. He is the only one left behind bars.

After marking his 70th birthday, he continues to mentor young prisoners, serve as a resource to community organizations in Puerto Rico and the diaspora, and to paint and draw, having become an accomplished artist whose work has been displayed in over 24 cities in the U.S., Puerto Rico and Mexico.

In spite of the fact that he has maintained exemplary conduct in prison for more than 20 years, in 2011 the U.S. Parole Commission denied parole, insisting that he serve another 15 years before it would even consider releasing him. By then he will be 83 years old.

May 29 of this year will mark the 32nd anniversary of his arrest. Oscar has earned the dubious distinction of being the longest held political prisoner in the history of the Puerto Rican independence movement. A petition seeking his immediate release awaits President Obama's signature. Write to him at:

Oscar López Rivera
#87651-024
PO Box 33
FCI Terre Haute
Terre Haute, IN
47808

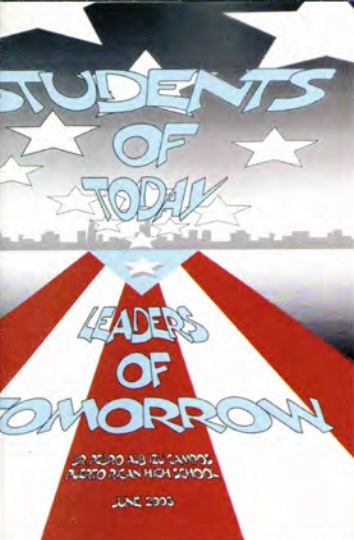
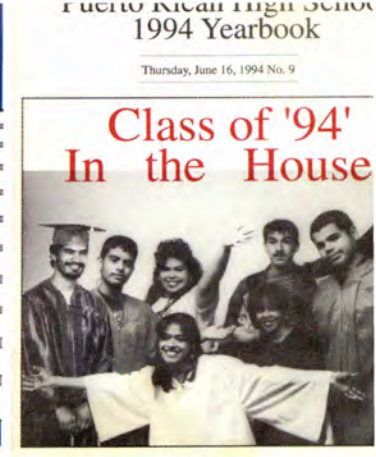
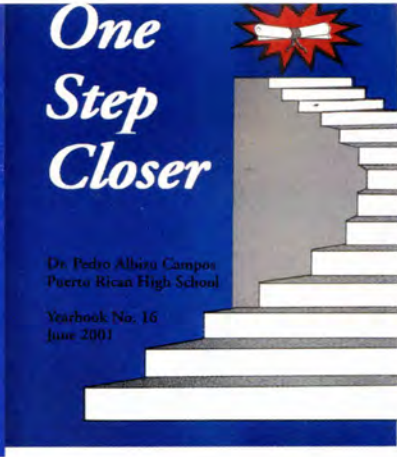
rent. In order to do it, we had to devote time to do car washes, to sponsor dances, to do raffles, and to seek donations from the community. But that came at a cost, because we were losing valuable time and human resources, i.e., parents, students, and teachers. Et al. The good outcome was that the challenges were met and the school continued surviving.

In 1975, the school purchased the building on Claremont. For the first time in its history it had a place of its own. After the purchase of the building and one last fundraiser, I decided to resign from the school's board. But the last fund raising needs mentioning because it became an ordeal. The foundation that had given us a few small grants rejected the last proposal we had submitted. I met with its director, and I was able to find out the reason for the rejection. He told me a new Puerto Rican member of the foundation was the one who had opposed our proposal. When he told me the name of the individual it was a blow, and I felt overwhelmed with anger and deception. I begged the director to come to the HS and meet with us. After much cajoling and heated arguments, he decided to give us another small grant. If my memory serves me correctly, that was the last time I visited the school.

Even though we had survived up to that point, the school continued facing more and more challenges. Probably the most difficult one was the attack of the federal government. It wanted the school closed alleging it was a school founded by terrorists and it was a breeding ground for them in spite of the fact that it had no evidence to prove its allegations. But a solid group of committed individuals kept it open. The challenges included the actual closing of the school. When that happened the community responded and came to its rescue. By surviving its closing the school became stronger and better.

I'm relating this account with the hope that the student body, the staff and every one else involved with PACHS can look back at the last 40 years, and with a critical mind, appreciate what the school has accomplished in spite of the enormous challenges it has faced. It all started with a good idea that became an experiment that transformed itself into an institution that all Puerto Ricans and the people who have been touched by it could be proud and committed to making it better and to perpetuate its survival.

Big hugs with short Puerto Rican arms and much love.

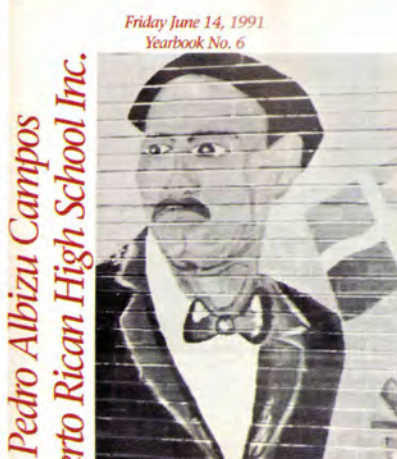
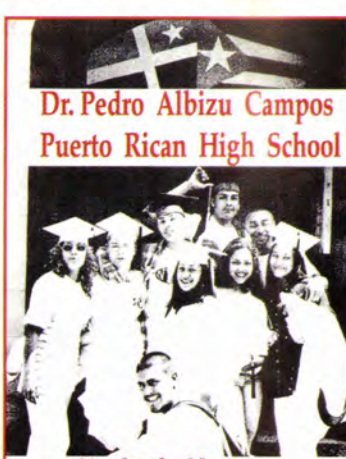
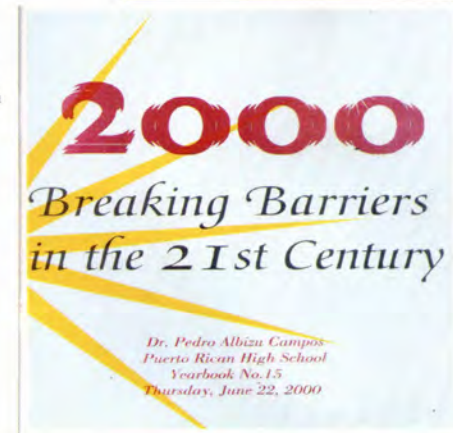
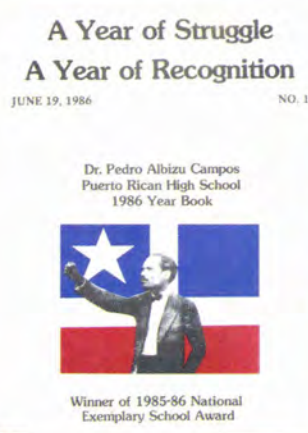
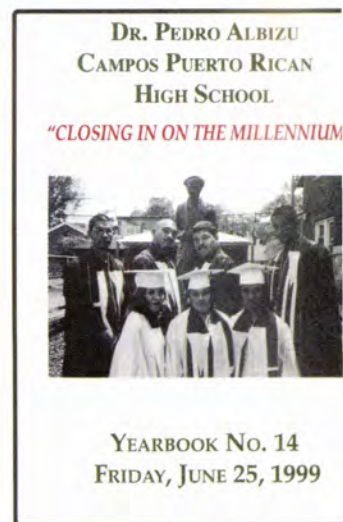
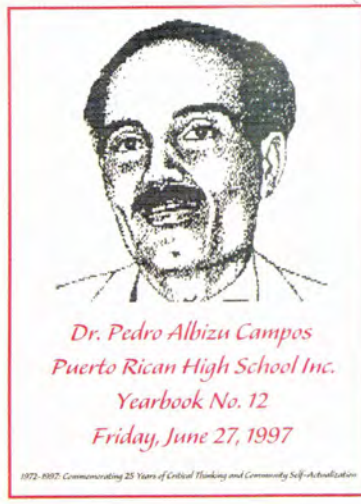


**Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos
Puerto Rican High School Inc.**



"La libertad no es más que la práctica de la razón y la razón es un instrumento, y nada más de la verdad."
—Eugenio María de Hostos

**Thursday, June 16, 1989
1989 Yearbook No. 4**





"EDUCATION BREAKS CHAINS"
DR. PEDRO ALBIZU CAMPOS PUERTO RICAN HIGH SCHOOL 1972-2012

