

MÁS SABOR

The Colors of Our Community

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Once upon a time, in a vibrant and lively neighborhood, there was a child named Maya. Maya lived in a community where houses were painted in all colors of the rainbow, and people greeted each other with smiles on their faces.

One sunny day, Maya and her friends gathered at the local park to enjoy some outdoor fun. They swung on the swings, climbed on the jungle gym, and played games together.



As Maya walked back home after a day full of adventures, she noticed something. Although her neighborhood was predominantly made up of people from the same culture, she realized there were still differences that made each person unique.

From her window, Maya could see families from different cultures walking down the street — some wore colorful traditional clothes, while others spoke different languages. Maya wondered how she could celebrate and appreciate the diversity in her community.



Inspired by her observations, Maya grabbed her sketchbook and colored pencils and started drawing. She thought about organizing a community event that would bring everyone together and showcase the wonderful diversity that exists in their neighborhood.

Maya got to work and carefully crafted colorful invitations for her event. She then went from house to house, delivering the invitations with excitement and anticipation. She couldn't wait to see how everyone would contribute to the event.



The day of the event arrived, and Maya's heart swelled with joy as neighbors gathered in the park. Each person brought something that represented their culture or personal interests — from tasty dishes to traditional artifacts, musical instruments, and even sports equipment.



Maya met people from all over — from Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Venezuela and more.

Maya tried lots of different foods. Havana's Cafe bustelo, Spanish fish stew, ceviche from Peru, pandebono and more.

"The act of cooking is a representation of simplicity and bonding," a vendor told her.



She learned about Mexican culture through folklorico dancing, in tune to the Güiro and Cuatro being played in the background.

“What does the Cuatro mean to you?” Maya asked the man playing.

“I come from a family of musicians,” he responded, “and my great-grandfather’s Cuatro has been passed down through generations. It reminds me of my family and our traditions.”

She continued walking, amazed with all that she saw, and passed a row of artists. One artist was showcasing his painting of El Avila in Venezuela, his favorite place to be. His paintings showcased the history of Latin America, as Maya looked across paintings of agricultural fields, Galápagos penguins, cowboy boots, cows and horses, and she was amazed by the incredible nature of Latin America.



The park buzzed with laughter, conversation, and the vibrant colors of different cultures. Maya looked around and saw smiles on everyone's faces. It was a sight that warmed her heart and filled her with a sense of belonging.

As the event progressed, Maya thanked everyone for their participation and the beautiful contributions they made to the community. She spoke about the importance of celebrating diversity and how it enriches everyone's lives.



Standing before her diverse and unique community, Maya felt a deep sense of gratitude. She had learned that even though their neighborhood was predominantly made up of people from the same culture, there were still differences that made each person special. And through the event, she had brought everyone together, celebrating the colors of their community.



Thank you to Más Sabor, our Latine collective at Highwire, for taking the time to share their stories and develop *The Colors of Our Community*. We've had a wonderful time putting this book together in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, and to close, we leave you with our own reflections answering the question:

What reminds you of your culture?

“Folklorico dancing reminds me of Mexican culture. I love that it’s a way for us to show the diversity of our people through beautiful attire and meaningful dances.”

“The instrument the Güiro! It represents my time growing up in New York. People would be playing the instrument along to music, or simply creating their own music, dancing at block parties and family gatherings. The music, and this instrument, brought people together.”

“The delicious homemade food reminds me of my culture. Whether being cooked in a street cart or by my own hand, it reminds me of my Mexican culture. The act of cooking, to me, is a representation of simplicity, bonding and tradition.”

“Cafe Bustelo. My dad has always said that this coffee reminds him of his home in Havana, and he always shares stories of his childhood there when we drink it together.”

“Fish stew. I grew up by the sea, and fish stew is a very typical dish from the part of Spain I am from. It brings back memories of Sunday family outings to restaurants by the water, in winter or summer.”

“I come from a family of musicians, and my great-grandfather’s Cuatro has been passed down through the generations. It reminds me of when my family would come together around the holidays, play music, sing & dance.”

“The food! We would always link up with the family and eat some good food and listen to music together.”

“On Sundays, my dad will make delicious pandebonos! I love the smell of the cheesy bread baking in the oven — and it tastes delicious!”

“Baseball was very important to all of us in the town. It was a way for everyone from Ixpalino to get together. We would all meet at the sala where the parties would happen, then all walk together to the baseball field. Baseball is not only important in Sinaloa, Mexico but also in other Latin countries.”

“I was born and raised in Caracas (moved to the US when I was 20) — El Avila represents home to me, peace and a sense of belonging.”

“Agriculture fields and farmworkers remind me of my culture.”

“The Galápagos penguins! It represents how amazing the nature is in Ecuador. We have the mountains, the sea, cities, the forest, and of course one of the most unique places in the world: Galápagos.”

“Definitely the food! Lomo saltado, rocoto, pollo a la brasa, ceviche — Peruvian food holds a special place in my heart and reminds me of all of the amazing meals I’ve spent with my Peruvian family.”

“I think of cowboy boots, cows and horses. Growing up, we’d go to my grandpa’s ranch, where we’d look at all the cows he had. I always wanted cowboy boots to really fit in, but my parents couldn’t buy me any at the time. I still look forward to going to the ranch each time I visit and riding the horses while we look at cows that are spread out through the land.”

“Coqui! They are small frogs native to Puerto Rico and are a BIG symbol of our culture. They are known for the “songs” they sing at night.”

“There’s a song by Celia Cruz called “La Negra Tiene Tumbao” and fun fact — my grandma sang backup for Celia in the 50s!”

