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NUESTRA HERENCIA: SENIOR LEGACY FILM PREMIERE

A Pilsen Senior Legacy Film Project – Nuestra Herencia – premieres during Hispanic Heritage Month at the National Museum of Mexican Art.

CHICAGO, Illinois --Nuestra Herencia: Legacy Film Project brings together a series of short documentary films exploring histories, gardens, and legacies through the lives of ten senior gardeners of El Paseo Community Garden in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois. This short film series, a co-production of El Paseo Community Garden and On The Real Film, uniquely recognizes the individual lives of the elders, their stewardship of the garden, and engagement as long-standing residents of the Pilsen neighborhood; while addressing broader issues of health, immigration, gentrification, and environmental justice. As part of the project,
Yaritza Guillen is creating an interactive story map that reshapes El Paseo Community Garden beyond its acre of land to the elders’ native homes in Latin America as you dive into their stories. What started as a labor of love during the pandemic, the project team has secured the support of many community members and local organizations, even awarded grants. These partnerships and support have allowed for the elders to experience a full movie star treatment with a red-carpet premiere. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage month and join the premiere Wednesday, October 12th at the National Museum of Mexican Art.

Despite the many partnerships and support, the project has still been primarily a labor of love for the growing team. The team began filming with no funding and created a 10 minute preview that became pivotal in securing support. The team is grateful for their early-on supporters who contributed to the GoFundMe through the Garden’s land trust and fiscal agent, NeighborSpace. Shortly after promoting the crowdfund, they received a Neighborhood Access Program Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events. The team was able to leverage the grant to secure support from community organizations including The Resurrection Project, Yollocalli Arts Reach, Alivio Medical Center, Cafe Jumping Bean, Pilsen Arts & Community House, and 25th Alderman Sigcho-Lopez. Most recently On The Real Film received funding from the Chicago Digital Media Production Fund, a project of Chicago Filmmakers funded by Voqal.

The original 10-minute preview created in 2021 has been presented at local and international conferences and screenings including The Nature of Cities international virtual conference, The Whole Life Academy with the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Germany, and Chicago OnScreen.

Paula Acevedo, the volunteer co-director of El Paseo Community Garden and creative director for Nuestra Herencia, has long envisioned a legacy project to honor the garden seniors she has built familial relationships with.

“The seniors have always been my driving passion for the work in the garden, I wanted to preserve their stories for some time. The pandemic was especially scary and fueled this labor of love and as work slowed for many artists in 2020, the stars aligned to collaborate with our fellow garden members and friends for the ultimate dream team [Erin Babbin, Michael Sullivan, Yaritza Guillen, Tamara Becerra Valdez, and Acevedo herself].” - Paula Acevedo

Erin Babbin is the co-director and producer for Nuestra Herencia. She is a documentary filmmaker who believes in keeping it real. Babbin studied documentary filmmaking at Columbia College Chicago with Michael Sullivan, Nuestra Herencia’s cinematographer. They founded On The Real Film in 2011 to share stories of people underserved by mainstream media, elevating Chicago voices and narratives. On The Real Film’s work has been screened internationally in Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Mumbai, Hamburg, Chicago, Toronto, and Park City. Erin and Michael have been members of El Paseo Community Garden since 2014.
"One of the reasons I love this project dearly is that everyone in front of and behind the camera is a member of El Paseo Community Garden. We have been planting and growing our roots together for years, and what is manifesting is truly a reflection of our community resilience and love." - Erin Babbin

The premiere will offer catered food and drinks, live music by Carlos Nuñez (one of the featured seniors) and Lester Rey - whose music are both included in the film series, project swag, and more. All ticket sales and donations from the premiere will go towards the project team and will help continue screening the project at free community screenings in 2023.

For more information and to buy tickets visit www.elpaseogarden.org/nuestra-herencia
Want to support the project, but can’t make the premiere? Donate to our GoFundMe

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