

## Gualala Arts Global Harmony Series:

Encouraging global harmony by sharing cultures through the arts

# DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS



## DAY OF THE DEAD

Day of the Dead will be celebrated at Gualala Arts Center on Sunday, October 31 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Complementing the celebration will be an exhibit of shrines and the exciting return of the Los Caporales de Santa Rosa Mariachi troupe performing with the Coast Folkloric Dancers. Authentic Mexican food and drinks will be available for purchase.

While Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a tradition unique to Mexico, it is becoming a very popular holiday in the United States. Javier Chavez, bilingual bicultural family advocate for Action Network, comments, "There is an appeal here which just crosses right over the culture line. People who are Latino, who speak no Spanish, really relate to the experience. I think this is because it's an integration of life and death - it's about family togetherness, and honoring who we are. This eases the grief of losing someone we care for, and it takes away the fear."

America's traditional Halloween is a fun holiday which most people enjoy, but the spirit (pardon the pun) of the holiday no longer rests on deeply held religious beliefs. It has evolved mostly into wearing elaborate costumes and for kids, collecting a large bag of candy.

Wikipedia elaborates on the history, "The ancient Celts

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2010**

**4:00 TO 7:00 P.M.**

**GUALALA ARTS CENTER**

believed that on October 31 the boundary between the living and the deceased dissolved, and the dead become dangerous by causing problems such as sickness or damaged crops. Costumes and masks were worn at festivals in an attempt to copy the evil spirits or placate them."

The Catholic Church introduced All Soul's Day and the belief that souls were released from Purgatory and allowed to walk the earth so the tradition began of making offerings to these feared souls.

The Mexican expression of these ideas seems to have selected the best of all these traditions. The elaborately iced sugar Calaveras (skulls) bring out the kid in each of us while the traditional altars reveal a reverence for those who have died. As you walk among the hand crafted altars on display, the "artists" will gladly introduce you to who is being honored. Often there will be their favorite food, something to remind them of their favorite past times, many photographs of their life and occasionally favorite hats or boots. You will walk away feeling you know a little about that person and how much they are remembered and still loved by family and friends.

Enjoy the shrines, feast on the home-made tamales, but what you will remember is the mariachi troop singing from the heart, people dancing everywhere and the swirling skirts of the folkloric dancers. All generations of the local Mexican community clap for their favorite Mexican state dance while all generations share the warmth of the local community.



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