

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Sunday, November 2, 2008, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Gualala Arts Center

Gualala Arts will have their first Day of the Dead celebration on Sunday, November 2 from 3 to 7:00 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public. Live mariachi music, Los Caporales, and local Folkloric Dancers will be performing. Mexican food and beverages will be available for purchase. You will enjoy Mole Poblano and Mexican Tamales (prices range from \$3 to \$8 for singles to full plates). Just to let the dead know what they're missing, we'll pour Mexico's famous beers, as well as local brews.



Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a tradition which is unique to Mexico. While its timing in the solar year corresponds roughly with Hallowe'en, the holiday known as Day of the Dead has its roots in the vibrant culture of ancestral Mexico which flourished long before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores and Catholic missionaries.

Today, Day of the Dead, complete with elaborately iced sugar calaveras (skulls) and candle-lit ofrendas (altars) fragrant with yellow marigolds is a phenomenon in many major American cities, especially those with a large Latino population. This year the Gualala Arts Center will present the area's first Día de los Muertos celebration in partnership with the Gualala-based family resource center, Action Network (www.actionnetwork.info). The non-profit Action Network is the only facility of its kind on the Redwood Coast, nurturing our community with services including counseling, training and mentoring.

"Day of the Dead is now becoming one of the most popular holidays in the USA," comments Javier

Chavez, Bilingual Bicultural Family Advocate for Action Network. "There is an appeal here which just crosses right over the culture-line. People who are not 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 takes away the fear."

Altars and Shrines on Exhibit

Through-out all cultures around the world, we encounter the very human need to remember and honor our ancestors and important events from our past. Two of the most popular celebrations honoring the dead in the United States have evolved from the Mexican tradition of Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) and the Roman Catholic All Saints or All Souls Day. These holidays focus on gatherings of family and friends to honor and remember friends and relatives who have died. Traditions include building private altars honoring the deceased, and visiting the graves of the departed.

Gualala Arts is inviting the community to celebrate Day of the Dead this year by joining in a festival held on November 2 and participating in an exhibit of altars and shrines being held at the Arts Center between October 27 and November 3. We welcome anyone, regardless of age or heritage, to share their altar or shrine creations, whether they are personal, family shrines or artistic interpretations on the theme of death and remembrance.

This exhibit is not juried. All mediums, two or three dimensional are welcome. The altars may be offered for sale, or not. Gualala Arts is offering two exciting venues for exhibiting altars: either outside along the Loop Trail, or inside the Coleman Auditorium.

If you want to participate, download and fill out the registration form at GualalaArts.org or pick one up at the office. The registration form is due no later than Saturday, October 25. Please read the registration form for more details about the exhibit.