

## **Excerpts from the 2004 Historia Competition Los Angeles Winning Essays**

**Carlos Flores**, Age 13, Berendo Middle School, Los Angeles

### ***The Latino Experience***

“We are all in search of a better life than our old life and hope to find a good job to maintain us. My parents work very hard to maintain us and to save me money for our college education. The Latino experience is different for everyone here in the United States. Some people, like my parents, coming to the United States and getting used to a new lifestyle and language as well as technology can become a challenge.”

**Alan Lee**, Age 16, Foothill High School, Tustin

### ***Aunt Helen***

“As I reflect upon my life, there are memorable people-people like Aunt Helen, who is perhaps the most important person in my life. When she arrived we would spend time learning arithmetic and strolling near stores adorned with tiaras of neon lights. I felt strange even years after her move, but I knew that she had other obligations. As time passes, it becomes clear that Aunt Helen shaped my life greatly, helping me discover the importance of feeling loved.”

**Bryan Morales**, Age 13, Vine Street Elementary, Los Angeles

### ***Day of the Dead***

“This is an ancient festivity that has been much transformed through the years, but which was intended in pre-Hispanic Mexico to celebrate children and the dead. This Mexican holiday is the time when Mexican families remember their dead and the gift of life. The original celebration can be traced to the festivities held during the month of Miccailhuitonli (the lady of dead).”

**Edwin Perez**, Age 13, Vine Street Elementary, Los Angeles

### ***Day of the Dead***

“The traditional observance calls for a feast during the early morning hours of November the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the day of the dead proper through modern Mexican families usually observe the day of the dead with only a special family dinner showing the bread of dead (pan de Muerto). It is good luck to be the one who bites into the plastic toy skeleton hidden by the baker in each round loaf. Friends and families give each other gifts like sugar skeleton or a death motif.”

**Isabel Castro**, Age 14, Nimitz Middle School, Huntington Park

### ***Frida Kahlo***

“Frida Kahlo was an extraordinary female Mexican artist. Most of the paintings that Frida created were self-portraits that reflected her physical and emotional sufferings. She often portrayed herself colorfully in Mexican Indian Costums and ornaments. No matter what she painted, her paintings were always amazing. Frida died famous with respect, but most importantly with honor.”

**Julie Benitez**, Age 13, Berendo Middle School, Los Angeles

***Olvera Street***

“Olvera Street was named after the first county judge, Agustin Olvera, in 1877. Olvera Street started out as a short lane called “Wine Street.” In 1877 the name was changed to Olvera Street in honor of Agustin Olvera who owned a home at the end of the street across from the plaza. As I mentioned before Agustin Olvera was the first county judge of Los Angeles. The Avila Adobe building lines up the streets, built around 1818 by a former mayor, Francisco Avila.”