

September marks **HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH** to commemorate the traditions and legacy of Hispanic and Latino people. This year's theme,

“One Endless Voice to Enhance our Traditions,”



exemplifies the language arts division's motto, **“Find Your Voice,”** which Wego students develop through their reading, writing, and discussion. This year, students have a variety of opportunities to develop their cultural competency and celebrate Hispanic authors.

Freshmen began the year with an examination of Joseph Campbell's mythic hero cycle, which included close reading of a variety of Greek myths; however, students also read the young adult novel, *La Linea* by Ann Jaramillo, which chronicles the travels north of two Mexican teenagers, Elena and Miguel DeCervantes, as they hope to reunite with their parents in California after years of separation. Ninth graders also investigate coming of age this semester, which will include the poetry of Mexican-American authors Gary Soto's *“Oranges”* and Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, which emphasizes the enlightenment and loss of innocence that occur when one matures. Students analyze characterization and write introductory arguments that focus on change and comparison and contrast.



Sophomores also analyze Latino literature. During the second semester, students in English 2 and English 2 Enriched read Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies*, which champions the work of the Mirabal sisters in a fictionalized account of their resistance against the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic in the 1960s. In addition to standards focused on the complex characterization of the four protagonists and examination of thematic topics such as rebellion, identify, martyrdom, and legacy, students consider author's craft through the extended metaphor of the “mariposas” or butterflies.

Junior Wildcats study Hispanic literature including excerpts from Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek* in English 3, and

students in English 3 Enriched will read [Bless Me, Ultima](#) by Rudolfo Anaya, which is considered one of the most notable novels in the Chicano canon. This unit introduces students to magical realism, a genre of literature that originated in Latin America. In *Bless Me Ultima*, a coming of age tale set in New Mexico after World War II, Adolfo's protagonist Antonio Márez y Luna, Tony, struggles with identity and wonders how to navigate through the tensions of his ancestral past in 20th century America. Hopefully this text will inspire student to believe that they can honor each part of their identities.

This fall, students in **Steve Aiello**, **Mary Fremeau**, and **Lauren Stewart's** English 3 Enriched sections wrote narratives modeled upon Zora Neale Hurston's "How it Feel to be Colored Me". Junior **Oliver Bonilla** and his classmates shared how components of one's assigned and chosen identities impact ones lives.

In the essay titled, "How it Feels to be Mexican Me," Bonilla wrote, "I am Mexican. My parents were born in Mexico and came here to the United States, so I could have a better opportunity than they did. I take that responsibility to school every day to make my parents proud and that it was worth the arduous time to get here. They work laboriously every day to make my dreams

come true, and to see them smile for something I did makes me tear up with happiness. The love for my mom is as deep as the ocean, and even though I do not show it, it still exists. Every night while I sleep, she blesses my siblings and I, so we can have a wonderful day in school. She wants the best for us and always repeats "Echale ganas en la escuela mijo, yo se que si puedes lograr buenas cosas." ("Try your best in school son, I know that you can achieve greatness").

Although Hispanic Heritage month only lasts for a few weeks, the Wego Language Arts Division seeks to welcome and celebrate all students and their past, present, and futures. Join in commemorating Latino art, literature, music, and lives.

Articles from division administrators are provided on a regular schedule in our Community eNewsletter to keep parents and community members informed. Questions on this article may be directed to Ms. Mary Howard, language arts division head, at mhoward@d94.org or by phone at (630) 876-6363.

