

Monterey Bay Economic Partnership to Honor Leader for Dedication to Uplifting and Empowering the Community of Pajaro

Local Leader Sister Rosa Dolores Rodriguez to Receive Alfred Diaz-Infante Community Impact Award at MBEP's Holiday Mixer

MARINA, CA, UNITED STATES, December 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Monterey Bay Economic Partnership \(MBEP\)](#) will recognize longtime community

“

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*Sister Rosa Dolores Rodriguez,
Casa de la Cultura Center
Executive Director*

volunteer Sister Rosa Dolores Rodriguez with the Alfred-Diaz Infante Community Impact Award for her service to the Pajaro community. The award, in conjunction with MBEP's 2024 Public-Private Partnership Awards to Comcast and Cruzio Internet, will be presented by MBEP President and CEO Tahra Goraya and MBEP Board Chair and UC Chancellor Cynthia Larive during a Dec. 12 Holiday Mixer in Marina.

Alfred-Diaz Infante Community Impact Award: Sister Rosa Dolores Rodriguez, Executive Director of [Casa de la Cultura Center](#) and Chair of the Pajaro Disaster Long Term Recovery Alliance (PDLTRA), has demonstrated unwavering

dedication to the Pajaro community, especially in the aftermath of the flood disaster. Her leadership has been instrumental in mobilizing resources, fostering collaboration among local organizations, and advocating for the most vulnerable residents. Through continuous weekly meetings at Casa de la Cultura, Pajaro residents and businesses are building a stronger sense of community specifically for the Latino and Mixteco farmworking community ensuring that this historically underserved group has a platform to voice their needs and access culturally and linguistically appropriate resources. These efforts not only offer immediate relief but also empower Pajaro's residents to actively shape their future by giving them agency.

Brought to Watsonville in the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, Sister Rosa soon discovered Pajaro, where she realized the extent of its unmet needs. Working out of a room behind the church rectory, she started bringing resources to a community largely invisible to the outside world and at times, abandoned by it.

For women who knew no work other than the fields, housekeeping classes led to higher-paying work in local hotels. Computer classes led to increased job skills, connection and empowerment for the tiny community. Over time, she's brought people together, build coalitions of nonprofit providers and volunteers, all with one goal in mind: to uplift her community. "That's been the focus throughout the years," she says. "How is it going to help the community, how is it going to help the women, how is it going to help the children, how is it going to make it better?"

In Spanish, she says, there's an expression — "No hay mal que por bien no venga" — which loosely translates to "there is nothing bad through which good doesn't come." So while the floods devastated Pajaro, they had a silver lining: They made the needs of an long-ignored pocket of Monterey County apparent on a large scale, and both residents and businesses are making significant strides in creating a collective voice. A land-use subcommittee has even begun identifying potential development sites to bring new homes to Pajaro, where affordable housing, even before the floods, was a significant challenge. "Our community is realizing how important it is to have a seat at the table where decisions are made," she said.

The late Alred Diaz-Infante, former president and CEO of CHISPA, an MBEP board member, and longtime public servant and housing advocate, was both a colleague and friend, says Sister Rosa, and receiving an award that carries his name is particularly moving.

"This award is very personal for me," she says. "I worked with Alfred throughout the years, and he did a lot for the community. Anytime I had a problem or question about housing, I would call him and he was always gracious and helpful. He was such a special person." Diaz-Infante, the son of immigrant farmworkers, led CHISPA for 24 years, helping develop thousands of housing units geared mostly to farmworkers on the Central Coast. He died in a fatal car crash in 2021.

Join us in celebrating Sister Rosa Dolores Rodriguez, along with our 2024 Public-Private Partnership Awards honorees Comcast and Cruzio Internet, at MBEP's Holiday Mixer at noon on Dec. 12 at MBEP's headquarters, 3180 Imjin Road in Marina. Reservations are available online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mbep-holiday-mixer-tickets-1048253924707>

About Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP): Monterey Bay Economic Partnership (MBEP) is a regional member-supported nonprofit organization consisting of public, private, and civic entities located throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. Founded in 2015, our mission is to improve the economic health and quality of life in the region.

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