

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



**September 15th to October 15th**

Join us in celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month!

Each year, from September 15th to October 15th, Americans celebrate the history and honor the cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

## ECAC Asked: How Do You Celebrate?



**Nancy Giurato**

*Exceptional Parent  
ECAC Parent Educator  
NC DeafBlind Project Family  
Engagement Coordinator*

Hello, Hispanic community! My name is Nancy and I was born in Peru. I have lived in the United States for 20 years. I met my husband here and we have a multicultural family. Both of our children are exceptional children with medical needs. As immigrants, we always miss the

land where we were born and our favorite traditions and foods. Ever since I have lived in the United States we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in many ways, my favorite is when we gather as a family over our delicious Hispanic food, particularly scrumptious Peruvian food. So, take some time to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with your family. Enjoy! Cheers!

\*For those who like to prepare and eat dishes from other



countries I present you a very easy recipe for my favorite dessert: Peruvian style rice pudding. This recipe for rice pudding was taken from [comidasperuanas.net](http://comidasperuanas.net).

CLICK HERE FOR THE  
RECIPE



## Milagros "Millie" Ramos

*Exceptional Parent*

*ECAC Parent Educator*

I just returned from a trip where I learned about the Mayan Culture in Mexico and the Hispanic Heritage Celebration knocking on the door. What does this celebration mean to me? The Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration transports me to experience the richness of our culture, to savor our meals, those that only the mother of each of us prepares better than anyone! It also transports me to smile with our Spanish language, yes! A language sprinkled with the authenticity of each Spanish-speaking community. And here in this country, the United States, the uniqueness of our Hispanic-Latino race unites us in one heart, in one feeling of strength, resilience, values and progress. We are united by perseverance and the determination to achieve the dreams that we have already proposed when we made the decision to adopt this country as the

new mother land. Dreams for which we leave everything behind, family, friends, work, to become part of this new Hispanic-Latinx community that is part of the engine of the greatness of this country, a country built of immigrants, from the ethnic diversity of the entire world. A country that has recognized that diversity is the richness of being a great nation!



## María F. Bonilla-Cooksey

*Exceptional Parent*

*Foreign Language Interpreter*

*Morganton/Hickory CDSA*

Hello everyone! My name is Maria Fernanda Bonilla-Cooksey and I am from Costa Rica. In 2001, when I was 19 years old, I came to North Carolina. Costa Rica is a small country in Central America, located between Nicaragua and Panama. Costa Ricans are known as "Ticos" and Spanish is our mother tongue. Costa Rica has approximately 4.5 million inhabitants, which represents only 0.03% of the world's land area, but it possesses approximately 6% of the planet's biodiversity, with the largest protected area in the world (26.3% of its territory). 98% of Costa Rica's energy is derived from renewable resources, it has no army or military forces, and it has one of the highest literacy and life expectancy rates. I share these facts because they reflect Tico idiosyncrasies, including

ecological conservation, the belief in human rights and its advocacy, and an appreciation for education and peace.

Nowadays, I am the Spanish interpreter for the Children's Developmental Services Agency in Morganton/Hickory. Although I have lived longer in North Carolina than in Costa Rica, I still proudly identify myself as a Costa Rican, and as a Hispanic. Initiatives that seek to celebrate cultural diversity, such as the Hispanic Heritage one, are good tools to promote the education and participation of all members in the community. However, being Hispanic, I celebrate my cultural heritage every day both at home with my family and at work. My daughter speaks and reads Spanish, she talks to and visits her grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle and great-grandmother in Costa Rica, and she also identifies herself as Hispanic and Costa Rican. My cultural heritage is very important to me, both as an essential element to my identity and as a factor to my passion for Spanish speakers.

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### **Rosa Sanchez**

*Exceptional Parent*

*Bilingual Coordinator*

*Family Support Network of Greater Forsyth*

Hello, my name is Rosa Sanchez. I am the bilingual coordinator for the Family Support Network of Greater Forsyth. Although I was raised in the United States, I still feel proud to be Mexican. To be able to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month is a tremendous honor and it is good to pass this culture on to the youth. It is wonderful for the youth to know about our roots, respect our traditions, and to feel proud of those roots. Every year, when my children were young, I would explain to them the meaning of the colors of the flag. The three colors of the Mexican flag all contribute to the overall national character of the country they symbolize. Green stands for hope and prosperity, white stands for purity,

while red represents the blood that was shed by Mexico's heroes over the years. The eagle on the Mexican flag alludes to an important moment in Mexican history and culture dating back to the time of the Aztecs. Legend has it that one of their gods, Huitzilopochtli, told the Aztecs they should look for an eagle in a lake, sitting on a cactus and holding a snake in its claw. This is something I have instilled in my children, a little bit about the meaning of the Mexican flag. Although it is a small element of Mexican history, I think my children can explain to others what the flag means to a Mexicans. Being a Latina has helped me a lot throughout my life as well. The reason for this is that even when we are not family, we Latinos help each other.

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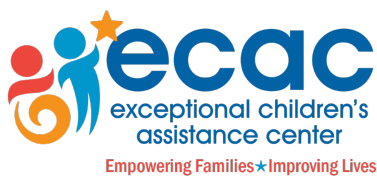
### **Paula Hutchison**

*ECAC Multicultural Outreach - Administrator Assistant*

Hispanic Heritage Month is a celebration to honor the history, culture and influence of past generations. I was born in Peru, a wonderful country admired by many. I am proud of how rich we are in culture, food and dances. As a Peruvian my favorite things are traditions, family values and culture. My children were born in the U.S. and I have taught them my traditions and customs. Peru is a very diverse country, divided by 3 regions: Coast, Highlands and Jungle. To me, Peruvian cuisine is one of the best cuisines in the world. In Fiestas Patrias it is traditional that we prepare our favorite foods and enjoy them as a family. What better time to feel proud of our



emblematic dishes produced throughout time and now praised all over the world. I feel very proud to be Peruvian!



**1-800-962-6817**

[www.ecac-parentcenter.org](http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org)



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