NEW BEGINNINGS

Retirement & New Leadership

The Multicultural Institute (MI) Board of Directors is pleased to announce the retirement of MI’s founder Fr. Rigoberto Caloca-Rivas and the appointment of Mirna Cervantes as MI’s new Executive Director effective July 1, 2021.

Fr. Rigo founded MI in 1991 and has worked tirelessly for over three decades leading the organization throughout Alameda, San Mateo, and Contra Costa Counties.

Fr. Rigo joins the Board of Directors in warmly welcoming MI’s new Executive Director, Mirna Cervantes. Mirna Cervantes has been MI’s Associate Director for the past 6 years and most recently earned her Master of Nonprofit Administration from the University of San Francisco.
Fr. Rigoberto Caloca-Rivas founded the Multicultural Institute in 1991, at a time when the idea of multiculturalism and understanding the needs of immigrants was still new and taboo. As an immigrant himself, he had the vision to create a space, and a community that not only embraces, but supports immigrants as they navigate their journey in the land of opportunity.

MI was merely a vision, but now, nearly 31 years later, Fr. Rigo’s vision has come to fruition as a respected, regional nonprofit organization with three service locations across the Bay Area. Through his leadership, MI has established and provided comprehensive services including housing and assistance for day laborers, youth education programs, immigration services and new programming to address the health needs of the immigrant community during the COVID pandemic.

The Multicultural Institute thanks Fr. Rigo for daring to have a vision, for being brave enough to be an immigrant that surpassed all systemic barriers in order to build something for his community. May he enjoy retirement after 30 years of hard work.
A LOOK BACK AT MI OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS

"WE ENVISION A COMMUNITY IN WHICH IMMIGRANTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR IMMIGRATION STATUS, ARE EMBRACED AND VALUED"

1991
FOUNDING OF MI
The Multicultural Institute was founded in Berkeley by Fr. Rigo. MI offered services to various immigrant communities.

1999
MENTORING FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS (MAS)
The MAS program was founded. MAS is the longest running MI program.

2001
EXPANSION TO CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
MI’s services and programs were expanded to the Richmond and the San Pablo community.

2006
EXPANSION TO THE PENINSULA
MI began offering services in Redwood City/North Fair Oaks out of the San Mateo County Human Services office

2010
RICHMOND OFFICE
Established a permanent presence and expanded services in West Contra Costa County by leasing a Richmond office.

2011
BERKELEY OFFICE
MI purchased a building and moved its central office to 1920 Seventh Street in West Berkeley.

2018
DAY LABORER HOUSING
Established permanent Housing Program for day laborers residing in San Mateo County.

2018
NORTH FAIR OAKS OFFICE
MI purchased “Casa de Paz y Bien” in North Fair Oaks. MI’s peninsula office was moved to this location and day laborer housing services expanded.

2021
1 MILLION DOLLAR ORG
MI’s annual revenue surpassed $1 million.
Executive Director: Mirna Cervantes

Mirna Cervantes has been with the Multicultural Institute for 11 years, starting as a volunteer and working her way up to be part of MI’s Administrative Team. Mirna grew up in the immigrant community of San Bernardino in Southern California and moved to the Bay Area in 2010 to attend UC Berkeley. As the daughter of immigrant parents, Mirna was drawn to MI’s mission and has spent the last 6 years as Associate Director. Under this role, Mirna worked full-time alongside Fr. Rigo as part of the administrative team and completed her graduate degree in the evenings. Mirna also expanded MI’s reach by doubling the revenue brought into the organization since her appointment as Associate Director.
MESSAGE FROM THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BY

MIRNA CERVANTES, MNA

A recent survey found that only 13% of nonprofit Executive Directors in the United States identify as people of color. Additionally, only 4% of Executive Directors are under 35 years of age (Board Source, 2021). Because it is so rare for someone my age and race to lead an organization, I am humbled and incredibly honored to serve the immigrant community as MI’s new Executive Director. I’ve been fortunate to work in different roles at MI and I am immensely grateful for the trust and support of the MI staff and Board of Directors.

While MI has had great success for nearly 31 years, serving thousands of immigrant families and expanding regionally, the staff and I are eager to do more. I believe our work is fundamental in empowering our community through advocacy, partnerships, and leadership opportunities. I believe in cultivating a safe space for immigrants to feel welcomed and in community. Our community is constantly changing and MI will continue its successful programs and services. MI is ready to grow, expand, and respond to new opportunities. I aim to build on MI’s foundation, continue and expand MI’s efforts and thrive for decades to come.

"I am here because more than ever I am passionate about MI’s mission and I truly believe that MI has the potential to create long-term systemic change."

I look forward to spending more time in the community now that it’s safer to gather and meet in person. Feel free to visit or call me at the Berkeley office, or send me an email at mirna@mionline.org. I am always interested to hear about how MI can better serve all of you.

LET’S MEET SOON
STAFF

MIRNA CERVANTES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PHURBU TSEWANG
ACCOUNTANT

DANIELA GONZALEZ-PEREZ
BERKELEY PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

RUDY LARA
RICHMOND PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

CESAR MEZA-ESVEILE
NFO PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

JOSUE REVOLORIO
NFO DAY LABORER PROGRAM DIRECTOR

MARIA DE LOS ANGELES
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SUPPORT COORDINATOR

ERICK DOMINGUEZ
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SUPPORT COORDINATOR

EDUARDO ROSAS
EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SUPPORT COORDINATOR

EMERITUS FOUNDER

FR. RIGOBERTO CALOCA-RIVAS

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VOLUNTEER

Contribute your time and talent with the Multicultural Institute. You will make a big difference. Call (510) 848-4075 ext. 301 for more information or visit our website at www.mionline.org.

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Email us at INFO@MIONLINE.ORG or visit WWW.MIONLINE.ORG

FROM POVERTY AND ISOLATION TO PROSPERITY AND PARTICIPATION