



**BRUCE A. BLAKEMAN**  
NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE

# 2023 NEWSLETTER



**NASSAU COUNTY**  
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Nassau County  
Office of Hispanic Affairs CASA



@HispanicAffairsCASA



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Office of Hispanic  
Affairs CASA

# A MESSAGE FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE BRUCE BLAKEMAN



Bruce A. Blakeman  
Nassau County Executive

As we transition into 2024, I, as Nassau County Executive, reaffirm our unwavering dedication to ensuring access to available resources, services, and vital information provided by Nassau County government for all its residents. It fills me with immense pride to acknowledge our dedicated department focused on the Hispanic community, a testament to our commitment to their continual participation in Nassau County's social, economic, and civic life.

Looking back on the achievements of 2023, the Office of Hispanic Affairs has been instrumental in building robust collaborations with prominent community leaders, various County departments, and the private sector. These partnerships have culminated in a diverse array of successful events – educational workshops, informative forums, and cultural celebrations, all aimed at bolstering the empowerment and engagement of the Hispanic community in our County.

As we step into the year 2024, my administration is more determined than ever to expand and enhance the opportunities available to the Hispanic community across multiple sectors. Our goal is to pave the way for their increased participation and advancement, contributing significantly to the vibrant tapestry of Nassau County. I extend my best wishes for a New Year filled with safety, prosperity, and boundless opportunities for everyone in our community.

# A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HERB FLORES



Herberth A. Flores  
Executive Director

Over the past year, we have successfully supported an increasing number of residents through a variety of programs and vital services, such as immigration assistance, social services, translation, housing and support to local businesses with the MWBE certification process

We express immense gratitude for the unwavering support of County Executive Blakeman, which has been pivotal in empowering our vibrant Hispanic community. This support has played a key role in enabling us to elevate existing programs and establish new, impactful partnerships with key stakeholders. Our collective endeavors have guaranteed that residents receive the essential support needed to thrive.

Looking forward to the coming year, our commitment is to uphold our crucial role as a link between County departments and government officials, ensuring equitable access to government resources for all residents. We plan to continue hosting educational workshops, providing guidance for business owners and celebrating the diverse tapestry of our Hispanic culture.

On behalf of everyone at the Nassau County Office of Hispanic Affairs, we extend our warmest wishes for a safe, prosperous, and successful New Year to all. Feliz y Prospero Año Nuevo!

# FELIZ NAVIDAD TOY DISTRIBUTION



The Office of Hispanic Affairs proudly celebrated the holiday season with our Annual Feliz Navidad Concert and Toy Distribution at the Mitchel Field Complex. This festive occasion, highlighted by performances from local talents like Uniondale Knight Time Jazz and Ricardo Esteban's Christmas Choir, brought joy to over 2,500 children that received toys.

We were honored by the presence of Belmont Stakes winner Javier Castellano, whose inspiring career added a unique spark to the event. Attendees also enjoyed magical moments with Christmas favorites like Santa Claus and the special appearance of Ana and Elsa from Frozen, thanks to the support of the Mineola Fire Department.

This year's event, featuring a variety of musical acts and beloved Christmas characters, reinforced our commitment to the vibrant Hispanic community and the spirit of the holidays. It was a day of joy, inspiration, and community celebration, marking another successful year for this Nassau County tradition.



# HISPANIC CLERGY MEETING



Nassau County Executive, Bruce Blakeman, met with prominent local Hispanic clergy members. This gathering served as a vital forum for discussing important topics such as educational development, nurturing stronger community connections, & brainstorming for future joint endeavors.

A significant aspect of this meeting was the opportunity it provided for these faith leaders to gain insight into the multitude of resources available through the County. Faith leaders also took time to pray for our County Executive, his family, & County representatives. We believe that ongoing engagement and partnership with our faith leaders will lead to more inclusive and beneficial initiatives, ultimately enriching the lives of the Hispanic community in Nassau County.

# HISPANIC LEADERS MEETING



We organized a "*Reunion de Líderes Hispanos*" gathering. This event aimed to unite Hispanic leaders and discuss how the Blakeman administration can more effectively meet the Hispanic community's needs and learn about some of the services that our office offers. It also allowed us to learn from one another's agencies about the programs and services that are available to our Nassau County Residents.

# ANNUAL TURKEY DISTRIBUTION

Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman and the Office of Hispanic Affairs once again demonstrated their dedication to the community through the successful Annual Turkey Distribution. Over 400 families received turkeys, underscoring the importance of ensuring every family can celebrate with their loved ones a Thanksgiving dinner. This event, supported by Island Harvest, Nationwide Mortgage, Long Island Cares, & Empire BlueCross BlueShield, showcased Nassau County's commitment to caring for its residents and fostering a sense of togetherness during this significant week.



# MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION



The Office of Hispanic Affairs recently held a delightful Mother's Day Dinner to honor the wonderful mothers who visit our office. The evening was filled with joy, featuring a special dinner, exciting raffles, and the captivating entertainment of singer Raffi Caballero. Adding to the significance of the event, members of the Nassau County Police Hispanic Society joined us. They provided valuable insights, sharing knowledge about recognizing the warning signs of gang involvement among youth. This informative session was an important part of our commitment to empowering and educating our community, ensuring a safe and bright future for our families. Additionally, we paid tribute to the late 'Ms. Lino,' naming her 'Mother of the Year' for embodying strength, love, and the essence of motherhood. Her memory and example continue to inspire and resonate within our community.

# BACK PACK DISTRIBUTION

Our office in collaboration with the Asian American Affairs and the Office of Health Equity, united to contribute significantly to our vibrant community by distributing over 1000 backpacks. This remarkable effort was made possible through the unwavering support & dedication of our incredible community partners & enthusiastic volunteers.

Providing backpacks filled with essential educational materials is a powerful statement about the value of education and the importance of supporting our youth. Events like these strengthen community bonds and demonstrate a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of every young mind in our diverse community.



# BLAKEMAN HONORS HALL OF FARMERS JOCKEYS



Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, alongside renowned jockeys Javier Castellano and Johnny Velazquez, and other notable figures, initiated the Belmont Stakes Weekend.

We proudly recognized the exceptional accomplishments of Castellano and Velazquez, Nassau County residents and victors in the 2023 Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes. As prominent Hispanic members of our community, their success is a source of immense pride and a testament to the talent within our local Hispanic population.

Celebrating such achievements is vital in our community!

# ALVARO TORRES VISITS NASSAU COUNTY



Nassau County welcomed Alvaro Torres, a Salvadoran singer and songwriter, and organized a forum to facilitate an interactive Q & A session about his personal & professional experiences. The event provided insights into his life journey, artistic trajectory, and performance at the Westbury theater along with renowned Latin artist Marisela.

# ACCESS TO CAPITAL



La Fuerza CDC, successfully conducted a Access to Capital Workshop. This event, designed to support current and aspiring business owners, offered crucial insights into seller registration and MWBE certification processes. It also explored a range of financing options available to entrepreneurs. Samuel Ballena, a representative from the Small Business Administration provided additional expertise on financial accessibility.

# SUPPORTING OUR HISPANIC BUSINESSES

Latino entrepreneurs are starting small businesses faster than the rest of the startup population and becoming a bigger part of the total U.S. market every day. Estimates are that they will make up 29 percent of the U.S. population by 2050, up from 17 percent today. According to a Stanford Graduate School of Business study, if those businesses grew as fast as the U.S. average, they could add \$1.4 trillion to the U.S. economy.

As this important sector grows, in Nassau, the Office of Hispanic Affairs is committed in ensuring that our Hispanic owned businesses have access to vital resources that ensure they continue to flourish.

Our office was also proud to support several grand openings of local businesses & milestones anniversaries for many businesses!



# FAMILY COURT FORUM



In collaboration with the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association, our department held our annual Family Court Forum. This partnership not only grants ongoing access to free information but also facilitated a dynamic event covering crucial Family Court topics like child support, PINS, guardianship, and custody. Our panel featured volunteer attorneys and Assistant District Attorney Silvia Finkelstein, who highlighted the vital role of the District Attorney's office and its range of services. This addition greatly enriched the forum, providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of procedures.

# HISPANICS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT



In collaboration with the Nassau County Police Hispanic Society, we successfully hosted a career forum, providing an opportunity for community members interested in law enforcement careers. Attendees were treated to motivational stories from several officers, including Deputy Inspector Damian Ramos, the highest-ranking officer in the Nassau County Police Department.



The forum also highlighted the 2024 police examination, with representatives from the Civil Service Commission available to answer queries about the exam process. Our office played a key role in promoting awareness of the upcoming police exam, underscoring our commitment to fostering a police force as diverse as our community.

# SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM



This year, the Office of Hispanic Affairs was thrilled to welcome a dynamic group of Summer Youth Interns: Wilson Velasquez, Byron Hernandez, Leslie Villalobos, Lesly Cruz, and Katherine Brizuela. Throughout their tenure, these bright individuals engaged themselves in a variety of enriching experiences, gaining invaluable insights and developing essential skills. Our interns engaged deeply with critical aspects of our work, including immigration services, community resources, and translation tasks. Their contributions ranged from meticulous research and resource gathering to proactive participation in organizing special events. This hands-on involvement not only enriched our office's operations but also provided them with a practical understanding of government sector workings.



A highlight of this year's program was the exclusive opportunity for our interns to tour various County facilities. This included the state-of-the-art David S. Mack Intelligence Center for Police Training, the proactive Office of Emergency Management, & the historic Theodore Roosevelt Executive & Legislative Building. These visits offered a unique perspective into each department's function & role, serving as a source of inspiration and aspiration for our interns. Overall, the program was a resounding success, fostering both professional & personal growth for these young talented Hispanic individuals. The interns left equipped with a suite of career skills, ready to excel in the workforce. Their journey with us stands as a testament to the value & impact of such immersive experiences in shaping future leaders.

# CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY



One of the services that makes us very proud is assisting constituent with the process to becoming US citizens. This invaluable service plays a crucial role in empowering individuals in our community to achieve their American dream. This year, a momentous citizenship ceremony was conducted by Nassau County Executive Bruce A. Blakeman at the Theodore Roosevelt Executive & Legislative Building. This event was a celebration of diversity, with new citizens originating from various corners of the globe, including Iran, Jamaica, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru and beyond.

Each new citizen was honored by the County Executive with a congratulatory certificate and a distinctive Nassau County pin, symbolizing their new status and the community's embrace. Achieving U.S. citizenship is more than a formal status; it's a step towards full participation in the nation's civic life, offering new opportunities for engagement, voting rights, and a deeper connection with the community.

Gaining U.S. citizenship is a profound milestone, marking a commitment to the values and responsibilities that come with being an American Citizen. We proudly congratulate Nassau County's newest citizens, celebrating their dedication and contributions to the rich tapestry of our community, and recognize the diverse backgrounds they come from, enriching our cultural landscape.

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**The Office of Hispanic Affairs looks forward to our continued partnership with our community leaders, and non-profit organizations to service the evolving needs of our residents. Please contact our office for any services at (516) 572-0750 or email us as [NCHispanicAffairs@nassaucountyny.gov](mailto:NCHispanicAffairs@nassaucountyny.gov)**