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Local

Celebrating Latino heritage: Two local organizations to be honored at annual awards

By Gaudalupe Rendon

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RACINE - Adopting a family for the Christmas holidays, giving scholarships and even starting a folkloric dance troupe are reasons why two Hispanic organizations are being recognized Friday in Kenosha.

Latinos Unidos of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside is one of the groups that will be honored by the League of United Latino American Citizens for their commitment to educating others about Latino culture and its preservation.

Marin Rocha, president of Latinos Unidos said the group has hosted several events aimed at cultivating educational excellence, maintaining and exposing the university students and faculty to the different Hispanic cultures and ways of celebrating those cultures.

"We are very proud of who we are," he said. "We are proud of our language and our culture. This year the Latino students started a folkloric dance group. We like to showcase our heritage."

Rocha, 24, said that Latinos Unidos held its first annual Latino Student Activist Forum this year, for which they brought in a speaker from the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute. The free forum was attended by Latino students from other universities.

"We are overwhelmed by this recognition," Rocha said.

Besides Latinos Unidos, Racine's Por La Gente Organization will be honored at the awards banquet. Por La Gente has focused on the education of Latino youths since it was formed 25 years ago.

It has hosted three sporting events throughout the year to raise funds that go toward scholarships for Hispanic students. Its biggest fund-raiser is an annual softball tournament held on Labor Day weekend. Por La Gente also awards scholarships at its annual banquet.

Yolanda Adams, president of LULAC Council 320, located at 2401 Lathrop Ave. in Racine, said the award-winners were chosen for their contribution to the betterment of their

community.

This is the fourth year that LULAC has held this event to honor those who have made a difference in their communities. The organization advocates the economic advancement, educational attainment, political influence, health and civil rights of the Hispanic it serves.

The funds raised from this event will go toward college scholarships, Adams said.

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