



December 2018



Greetings and Happy Holidays!

We have so much to tell you and so much to be thankful for. Exciting news all around here at the CP office!

- For starters, we were one of the few organizations in MA to have been invited to Michelle Obama's "I am Becoming" book tour event and social media campaign! **Our video** went viral on Twitter having had 82.9k views and retweeted by Michelle Obama with a note to us. Read about it on the **Boston Globe**.
- See picture of the big day above: We had a social media party at our office, sponsored by **Barrales Law**. Our participants, interns, and mentors took videos and photos sharing the excitement! We then headed over to the TD Garden in unison to listen to Michelle Obama for a night that proved inspiring to all as we continue working on becoming the best versions of ourselves.
- We have a total of 98 youth in our **School Based Program, Empowerment Institute and Community Based Program, and Queens Rise**.
- **UWander**, our international service-learning program, has selected its cohort and kicked off their retreat on Saturday, November 10th and Sunday, November 11th to start planning for our trip in March 2019.
- We were mentioned in the **Boston Globe** for our work with **ESC**.
- Our mentor Pamela Rosario, our past mentors and volunteers, Tariana Little and Ana Victoria Morales, and myself were awarded **El Mundo 2018 Latino 30 Under 30 award**.

Thank you for cheering us along!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials "dP" followed by a stylized flourish.

## Sponsor Spotlight

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Just as **Chica Project**, **The Lenny Zakim Fund (LZF)**, is deeply committed to social justice and to the fundamental rights and dignity of all people. LZF changes the course of people's lives. The Fund's commitment to supporting and partnering with grassroots social justice organizations through funding and capacity building is unique.



An LZF grant is often the first step – a chance to turn a vision into a sustainable reality. Grants are just the beginning of LZF's holistic support for the community. LZF provides training, networking, and pro bono legal services to do the most we can for our community partners, like Chica Project. LZF provides resources and guidance to help visionaries grow programs that serve:

- Child and Youth Development and Education
- Access to Food, Housing and Economic Opportunities
- Health Promotion and Accessibility to all
- Organizing and Support for Immigrants and Refugees
- Violence Prevention, Criminal Justice Reform and Family Outreach
- LGBTQ Community Support and Organizing
- Civil and Human Rights, Advocacy and Support

*"We have the power to change things. It doesn't take much to start a revolution of thought and spirit. It takes one person and then another and then another,"* these words of Lenny Zakim beautifully describe the work that Chica Project does every day. The amazing mentors who give their time so generously to the individual young women of Chica Project are committed to social justice in the most personal and impactful way possible. Through the **Empowerment Project, Queens Rise, and UWander**, Chica Project is developing a powerful, new generation of young women of color who are ready, willing and more than able to lead the revolution of *thought, spirit and action* that our world needs so desperately.

The Lenny Zakim Fund is proud to support and to partner with Chica Project in its work and we profoundly grateful to the women and girls of Chica Project who are making this a better world for us all.

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## *That's a Chica!*

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**Cynthia K. Orellana** is a disrupter, bridge-builder, and collaborative change agent with over a decade of public service experience in public policy, community engagement and systems reform. She serves on City Year Boston's Board, and has been recognized among the GK 25 Influential Millennial Leaders of Color, 30 Amplifiers by Amplify Latinx, and 100 most influential people in Massachusetts to the Latino community in El Planeta Newspaper's 2017 Powermeter list. She is the daughter of Salvadoran immigrants and first in her family to attend college. She holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree and is now pursuing PhD studies.

### **In what capacity are you involved with Chica Project?**

*I am one of the founding board members for Chica Project, and served in this capacity from 2011-2014. I advised the Founder and helped support the development of the organization's strategic plans, programmatic materials and early fundraising efforts. I continue to support Chica Project as a proud donor, and share the Chica Project mission among my circles of influence.*

### **Why did you decide to support Chica Project?**

*Chica Project was created to address a gap in leadership by Latinas leading in influential spaces across the state. The inter-generational pipeline building focus that started with early professional exposure and personal development for young girls and connections along a continuum of Latinas at varying stages, was inspiring and urgently needed. I have always been drawn by the unapologetic focus on Latinidad and the strength based approach to Chica Project. I see myself in many of the girls served by Chica Project, and supporting Chica Project is just another way of lifting up other future, better versions of girls like me.*

### **How have you seen Chica Project grow (considering your role as a founding advisory member)?**

*It has been a wonderful journey for Chica Project over the last almost eight years. Like any start-up organization, it has gone through a lot of changes as it tested its programming elements and sought to solidify who it would serve and how. Chica project started from a completely volunteer powered organization to now having full-time staff members, and a school-based model. Chica project has always been an organization led with a lot of heart and passion, and the Chica I see now continues to maintain that same*

energy, but in renewed ways with newer and younger people taking the helm of the organization. As mentioned, Chica was created by women who saw themselves alone at decision making tables, and lacking for themselves the kinds of supports along the way that they knew could be made better for the next generation. Chica now has a closer generational tie between its leaders and the youth that it serves, which creates a unique opportunity.

### **What is the value that Chica Project has had in your life?**

*As one of the early supporters of Chica Project, it has had a profound impact on my life - particularly, as Chica has been a space for community-building with strong shared values around lifting up other women. Chica celebrates the "we" and is about shared moments that highlight who we have been, who we are, and who we want to become. It's been one of the most genuine fellowships I have ever been a part of, and it feels good to know that I might have indirectly played a part in the lives of other girls who needed to be lifted and seen for all that they are and can be.*

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## *What People are Saying...*

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After participating on a panel for **Strong Women Strong Girls**, we received this message...

*My name is [REDACTED] and I am a Strong Women Strong Girls mentor from Simmons who attended the empowerment panel last night. I just wanted to say that I did not know anything about Chica Project before last night, but I was so impressed and fascinated by the organization's mission and your words about why inclusive girls' empowerment programs are so important in the world we live in. As a Spanish and social work major, I hope I can get involved in some way in the future, but I just wanted to reach out and say that I love the work you do and the things you said last night will really stick with me as I continue with Strong Women Strong Girls!*



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## *Opportunities*

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