

National “Hola Day” Celebration Launched By N.C. Author And National Speaker

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CHARLOTTE, N.C. – National Hola Day, a new celebration of Hispanic heritage and Spanish as a second language, will be observed on a national level by thousands of people on Oct. 1 as the result of enthusiastic efforts by a Spanish language author and educator who frequently speaks at national conferences.

Myelita Melton, president of Speakeasy Communications in Mooresville north of Charlotte, selected Oct. 1 as the official Hola Day because it falls in the middle of Hispanic Heritage Month, which begins annually on Sept. 15. “Hola” is Spanish for “hello” and a universal greeting in person and online among Spanish speaking people. It is also used as a greeting among an increasing number of non-Spanish speaking individuals.

“Our goal is to foster a greater understanding and appreciation for the use of the Spanish language in the USA,” Melton explained. “National Hola Day will also honor Americans who commit themselves to learning Spanish as a second language and use it in their daily lives.”

After promoting the new holiday at national conferences and a mass mail program, Melton has been notified by governor’s offices in Louisiana, Connecticut, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Maine that they are using her proposed proclamation language for their official proclamations related to Hispanic Heritage Month. Arizona, Tennessee, Iowa and Mississippi have expressed interest. Councils in Windsor and Rancho Cordoba, Calif., are voting on the proclamation in upcoming weeks. Other communities and states are expressing growing interest as the time draws near, Melton said.

Warin Parker, mayor of Windsor, said, “When you look at the make-up of our Town and analyze the demographics, it is apparent that being able to converse in Spanish would be advantageous to facilitating dialogue and in providing services to that segment of the population. We celebrate Cinco de Mayo on our Town Green with dance, food and music. It is well attended by the whole community. Hola Day is yet another way to encourage dialogue across the cultures.”

Melton added, “I am also receiving emails and phone calls from our university partners asking how their students can get involved, and I’m hearing from our business clients across the country, who are pledging to participate. All of us want to bring our country together in a positive way with better communication.”

Melton, who speaks on the importance of learning Spanish and related topics at conferences and seminars nationally, is a recognized expert in cultural diversity and Spanish language acquisition in adults. She is also the author of her company’s SpeakEasy Spanish™ series of books and audio programs. Her materials are industry-specific, focusing on the vocabulary professionals need on-the-job to work more effectively in multicultural situations.

“Earlier this year I began thinking about ways that thousands of our SpeakEasy Spanish™ students could celebrate their commitment to learning and speaking Spanish along with others across the country,” Melton said. “Most Americans know more Spanish than they realize, but are afraid to use it,” she continued. “By working together and using the language we are learning, we will make a positive difference on Oct. 1 in the attitudes and abilities of citizens around the country.”

In addition to speaking at conferences, Melton and her associates have sent information promoting National Hola Day to all governors in the U.S., all Senators, hundreds of newspapers radio and TV stations, in addition to top Latino movie, TV stars and studio heads. Her special website, www.officialholaday.com, provides additional details and a recommended proclamation in English and Spanish.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage in the US goes back to 1968, when Congress authorized President Lyndon Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week. This observance expanded in 1988 to a full month beginning annually on Sept. 15.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, America communities and individuals celebrate the traditions, ancestry, and experiences of people who trace their roots to Spain and Latin America. In his 2006 National Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation, President George W. Bush said, "Through hard work, faith in God, and a deep love of family, Hispanic Americans have pursued their dreams and contributed to the strength and vitality of our Nation."

"Participating in Hola Day is simple," Melton said. "We are asking everyone in America to say something in Spanish to someone else on Oct. 1. What you say can be as simple as 'hola' and 'adiós' or as complicated as you wish. Also, the person you speak to doesn't have to speak Spanish; the whole point is that you do."

Melton is pleased with the growing success of the Hola Day concept. In late July and in early September she had the opportunity to speak at the League of California Cities' executive forum for mayors and city council members. Over 80 officials attended her three programs. Several asked for ideas that would promote inclusion within the diverse segments of their communities. When Melton explained the Hola Day concept, "many of the mayors pledged to participate," she said.

For more information or a photograph, contact Myelita Melton at 704-662-9424 or holaday@speakeasyspanish.com. For information about SpeakEasy Spanish™: www.speakeasyspanish.com