

New Chicano Park Muralists Are Honored to Paint in the Park

by [Brent E. Beltrán](#) on April 16, 2014 · [0 comments](#)

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44th annual Chicano Park Day Celebration this

Saturday

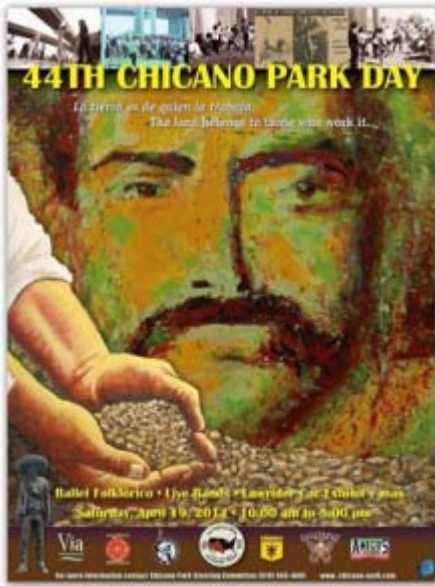
By Brent E. Beltrán

The Chicano Park Steering Committee and thousands of their friends will be celebrating the 44th anniversary of the takeover of Chicano Park this Saturday in San Diego's Barrio Logan. The theme of the celebration is "La Tierra Es De Quien La Trabaja: The Land Belongs To Those Who Work It."

Last year I [wrote](#):

"On April 22, 1970 a rag tag group of artists, activists, and community members joined forces and took over the land underneath the San Diego-Coronado Bridge in Barrio Logan. At the time, construction was about to begin on the building of a California Highway Patrol substation. For many years, residents of Barrio Logan had been promised a park. Seeing the pending creation of a CHP substation was the straw that broke this barrio's back."

Every year the community of Barrio Logan, as well as Chicanas and Chicanos from all over, and our friends and allies, all come together to celebrate the takeover of the area underneath the San Diego-Coronado Bridge.



Chicano Park Day attendees will experience traditional music and dance, highlighted by a Danza Azteca ceremony coordinated by Calpulli Mexihca. Other dance groups include Ballet Folklórico Tierra, Flor y Canto and Ballet Folklórico Azquetzalli as well as danza Zapateado rebelde by Mujeres en Resistencia. The event will begin with an opening blessing by Tim Red Bird and the Red Warriors.

Every year bands donate their time to perform, some coming from out of state. This year's lineup features [Radio La Chusma](#) from El Paso, Texas and [Los Nativos](#) and [Big Quarters](#) from Minnesota as well as Chocolate Revolution, Sumatra, Ruby Clouds, Trigger Nasty, Mariachi Imperial de San Diego, 2MX2, Project Unknown (Logan Teen Music Program), Back N Time and San Diego's Latin jazzy funk outfit, Surefire Soul Ensemble.



Artist and Barrio Logan resident Hector Villegas adds some blending to his mural.

Speakers are a big part of the celebration as well. Key presenters this year are Georgette Gomez of the [Environmental Health Coalition](#) and Rudy Gonzalez, son of the late Rodolfo 'Corky' Gonzales from the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado as well as representatives from the Brown Berets de Aztlán, Amigos Car Club, Via International and the [Chicano Park Steering Committee](#).

There will also be a display of classic lowrider cars organized by Amigos Car Club, a children's art workshop facilitated by Chicano Park muralist Victor Ochoa, informational booths from various San Diego organizations and an assortment of food, arts and crafts vendors selling their specialty wares.



Artists Cesar Castañeda and Patricia Aguayo work on their mural of Chicano Park Steering Committee chairperson Tommie Camarillo.

Prior to the celebration of Chicano Park Day artists have been busy preparing new murals for the public to enjoy. Every year at least one new mural goes up. Last year there were many new ones due to the Chicano Park Mural Restoration Project being completed and honored. This year four pillars received the new mural treatment.

I had the opportunity to talk with a few of the new muralists, most of whom have never painted a mural in the park before, and I asked them: "How does it feel to be painting in Chicano Park?" The following are their responses.

"I am doing this because I feel that as an artist it is my responsibility to contribute. To contribute to the Chicano Movement. To contribute to identity. To empower others. This is empowering for me. It's an honor. It's an honor to be able to paint on these walls that a lot of artists have painted on. Chicano Park is recovered land. To be able to contribute to that is huge."

– Patricia Aguayo, artist and [Open Spaces](#) project coordinator of Radio Pulso del Barrio



Cesar Castañeda works on his Mictlantecuitli mandala mural.

“It’s an honor to be able to help out and be a part of something much bigger. It’s a privilege to keep going what someone else started. It’s our responsibility as the next generation of artists to keep it going. It’s a way of honoring them too. I’ve been asked to paint for awhile. I’m finally ready to be a part of it. I see so many people giving a lot of effort to help out and that really motivated me to step in and help out in any way I can.”

– Cesar Castañeda, artist, Barrio Logan resident and owner of [Chicano Art Gallery](#)

“Painting at the park has been wonderful. It’s provided me a gateway to meet a lot of people that are curious to know what we are doing. Everyone is so wonderful out here. It’s nice to share the story of what we are doing. In regards to our painting we like to definitely involve the people and get their opinion. It’s been wonderful. It’s been great. It’s always a unique experience every weekend we are out here.”

– Jasmine Garcia, artist



Jorge Mendoza and Jasmine Garcia painting away.

“I think it’s an amazing opportunity to work with other artists, especially in this historical place and now a national monument.”

– Jorge Mendoza, artist and founder of [The Nest](#)

“It’s a privilege. It’s an honor to be a part of this legacy here. I come and I look at the murals, I walk around and I walk by the ones I worked on and it feels pretty good.”

– Hector Villegas, artist and Barrio Logan resident

Chicano Park co-founder and master muralist Victor Ochoa says this next generation of artists, people like Patricia, Cesar, Jasmine, Jorge and Hector as well as Eric de la Rosa and Coco Miller who also recently painted murals in the park, are “the future.” If that is the case then it is good to know that this generation of artists are also honored to be a part of, and have respect for, Chicano Park and those that made it happen.

The 44th annual Chicano Park Day Celebration takes place Saturday April 19 from 10am to 5pm at Chicano Park in the San Diego community of Barrio Logan. It is free. Parking is scarce, consider taking public transportation: Bus route #11 or Blue Line trolley to the Barrio Logan station. For alternate routes, check out [MTS](#).

Chicano Park Day unofficially continues into the night as Barrio Logan’s Chicano Art Gallery and La Bodega both host art receptions. Check out La Bodega for the Voz Alta curated [Mar y Tierra](#) exhibit from 1-8pm at 2196 Logan Ave. Then head across the street to the [Wero Anarchy Art](#) show

from 3-10pm at Chicano Art Gallery at 2117 Logan Ave. where there will be live music and DJ's throughout the day.

In addition to Chicano Park Day and the art exhibits [Radio Pulso del Barrio](#) will begin broadcasting live from Chicano Park Day and then head over to La Bodega for continued broadcasts. You can check out Radio Pulso at 1600 on the AM dial starting the morning of Chicano Park Day.

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Brent E. Beltrán is a third generation pocho that lives next door to Chicano Park in San Diego's Barrio Logan. He's the former publisher of Calaca Press, is married to his dreaming heart watcher and is the proud father of a baby Dino-saur. He's an MMA watching junkie who likes to get his nerd on by viewing superhero and sci-fi movies/tv shows. He writes the somewhat regular column Desde la Logan and is the newest addition to the SDFP Editorial Board. He can be contacted via email at desdelalogan@gmail.com and through his Twitter account [@DesdeLaLogan](#).