

October 20, 2017.

Buen Dia familia de Plato! / Good day Plato family!

We had a great day at Spanish class this week. We started by remembering a fun and extremely popular holiday called **Dia de los Muertos**, and it takes place in Mexico and some countries in South America, from October 31st through November 2nd. In class, we



learned that **Dia de los Muertos**/Day of the dead is commonly misunderstood as a variation of Halloween, but it is in fact a total different celebration. For Hispanic families, it is time to get together and remember and honor their loved ones who have died. For Mexicans and South Americans, death is celebrated as a natural and normal part of life. It is believed that on this day, the spirits of those who have died return to visit their family and friends whom are still alive. Families prepare their arrival by decorating their tombs with beautiful marigold flowers, and by setting up **altares**/ altars. In them they bring food, flowers, candles, candy, bread of the dead, beverages, sugar skulls and sugar skeletons and decorate it with **papel picado**/perforated paper. On top of the altar they set up the picture of the loved one who they want to honor. Students were very excited to tell the new students about the activities we do during this time of the year, including the preparation of our **Altar de Muertos**.

Ask your child all about it! Here's a video you can watch with your child, <https://youtu.be/rdLL45ljkEY> it is very informative.

In class, we took a vote to see what each student would like to do to participate on the Day of the Dead contest, which will take place next



Saturday October 28th at the Des Plaines History Center. They could choose from **flores**/flowers, **papel picado**/perforated paper, **calaveras**/skeletons, **velas**/candles, and **dulce**/candy. Last year we participated as a school, and this year we are even more excited to do it. We will be setting up our **Altar de Muertos** at the History Center, make sure you plan to come check it out and vote for our altar! The museum will also have fun activities set up for the kids:

<http://www.desplainseshistory.org/events1>

If there's any other Day of the Dead celebrations near you, I definitely encourage you to check them out.



Older students began preparing their own mini-altar, it will be made in a shoe box! The first step was cutting **papel picado**/perforated paper to decorate the box, students followed instructions on how to make it. They will fill it with all of the requirements for the altar.

Our little ones enjoyed a very popular book "**Una oruga muy hambrienta**"/The very hungry caterpillar. At the end, they were given a challenge: How tall can you build a Hungry caterpillar? The students had the time to experiment and play with the bottle caps given and we then counted how many bottle caps we could put together to make our caterpillar tall. Kids designed and redesigned their creation trying to make their caterpillar even taller. Vocabulary for this activity included numbers, fruits, colors, and a few adjectives such as **alto**/tall, **bajo**/short, **grande**/big, and **chiquito**/small.

“The word death is not pronounced in New York, Paris or in London, because it burns the lips. The Mexican, on contrast, is familiar with death, jokes about it, caress it, sleeps with it, celebrates it; it is one of his favorite toys and his most steadfast love.”

Octavio Paz, The labyrinth of Solitude, 1961.

Have a great weekend!

Soraya Castro

