

# **L&C to Hold Day of the Dead Altar Workshop**

October 19 2012 3:32 PM

GODFREY - The second annual Day of the Dead altar workshop will be held from 9 a. m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2, in Reid Hall, above the Underground Connection, at Lewis and Clark Community College.

This event is free and open to the public. Attendees are welcome to come and go as they please.



Something in our human spirit feels the need to remember our ancestors," said Ann Davidson, event facilitator and Diversity Council chair. "Art made for ancestor veneration can be found all over the world. When I lived in Los Angeles, Day of the Dead was a very big deal. Cemeteries would be filled with people colorfully decorating the graves of their loved ones. It is really a celebration of life through art."

In Mexico, the Day of the Dead is a holiday connected with Catholic All Saints Day and All Souls Day. The holiday can be traced back to indigenous cultures. Today, it is a chance for family and friends to remember loved ones who have passed away.

During the workshop, Michael Quintero, Associate Professor at St. Louis Community College in Florissant Valley, will return for the second year in a row to discuss the specifics behind this unique holiday. He will also construct a Day of the Dead altar, similar to the seven-foot tall one that was built at last year's altar workshop and included photographs of his ancestors.

"Decorating the altar gives people a chance to cherish the memory of deceased loved ones," Davidson said. "Last year we were thinking of Lewis and Clark sociology faculty member Chris Sutcliff, who passed away last October. Chris helped found the Diversity Council, was an excellent teacher who contributed so much to his students and all of us on campus. His students and colleagues memorialized him through their art. We put his picture on the altar."

Attendees are invited to make mementos in honor of their loved ones. These mementos will then be used to decorate the altar. Sugar skulls, candles, papel picado (cut paper) decorations and flowers will embellish the altar as well.

"During last year's event, another student remembered four of her Iowa high school classmates who had committed suicide," Davidson said. "She included an orange ribbon, a symbol to raise awareness about self-harm. A Vietnam veteran honored his recently deceased mother, who loved fish, by painting fish scales on his sugar skull. I honored the memory of my ancestors by putting copies of their portraits on the altar and little paper hearts with their names. We will have lots of supplies for the workshop so I hope a lot of people will join us."

This Lewis and Clark Diversity Council event is presented by the Mannie Jackson Endowment and Center for the Humanities and is a Lewis and Clark Arts and Humanities Project, with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information, visit [www.lc.edu](http://www.lc.edu) and search keyword "diversity."

Photo cutline: Students and community members make mementos in honor of their loved ones for last year's Day of the Dead altar at Lewis and Clark Community College.  
Photo by Laura Griffith, L&C Media Specialist