The ‘forgotten’ root of Mexican culture

Series of workshops to share Afro-Mexican culture

By ERIK CHALHOUB
OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

VERACRUZ — Referred to as the “third root” of Mexican culture, the Afro-Mexican community is often hidden from the public eye.

But a rising movement for constitutional recognition is gaining momentum, and to further that, a series of events will take place across the county starting Thursday to inform the public of this community and its traditions.

Titled “Black Mexico: The Forgotten Root,” Israel Reyes Larrea, founder of AFRICA A.C., and other members from Oaxaca Mexico, will share historical and current information about the Afro-Mexican communities of Costa Chica, Mexico.

AFRICA A.C. is a grassroots organization from Oaxaca Mexico, dedicated to themes related to the constitutional acknowledgement of the rights of the black communities in Mexico.

The coordinators Rubi Vasquez and Veronica Leon have been working on this event for more than two years.

“We felt that it is really important to get that information out to the community,” Leon said.

Much like the civil rights movement in the United States, Afro-Mexicans have been neglected because of racism and class issues, Vasquez said.

The talks also serve to challenge the popular definition of the Mexican identity.

“I think we have this image of what a Mexican is,” Vasquez said. “It’s an image that’s been programmed in our brains. If anything, people will walk away with a deeper understanding of what a Mexican is.”

The coordinators have seen a strong response from youth on the series, thanks to advertising through social media.

“People are eager and hungry for this information,” Leon said.

“We really encourage families to come out and bring their kids,” Vasquez said.

The series is sponsored by

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Cabrillo College Student Senate, Sueños Club and EOPS/CARE Program, Springfield Grange, UCSC Ethnic Resource Centers, and other organizations.

For information, contact Leon at vleon@cabrillo.edu.

SCHEDULE

Informational sessions
• Thursday: 10 a.m. to noon, Cabrillo College Aptos, Room SAC East 225, 4-6 p.m., Cabrillo College Watsonville Room A150.
• Friday: 12:30-1:30 p.m., UCSC Social Science 1 Room 110.
• Saturday: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., PVUSD parent workshop, Watsonville High School. 6-8 p.m.: Springfield Grange, 10 Werner Road in Watsonville.

Dance workshop
• Thursday: 7-9 p.m., Cabrillo College Watsonville Dance Studio.

A traditional dance is shown by members of the Afro-Mexican communities of the Costa Chica.