



Here is our final Latinx Heritage Month staffer Q&A -- with Estela Cruz-Pallares, a COVID-19 Paraeducator at Cascadia Elementary!

What part of Latin America is your family from?

Michoacán, Mexico

What do you love most about your culture?

Cruz-Pallares: "I really love all the traditions that we have in Mexico. We have Día de los Muertos coming up, I know quinceaneras are popular -- I had one -- and my family, they celebrate the day of Virgin Mary."

Favorite Mexican Food

Cruz-Pallares: "It would depend on the weather. During these colder months, I think pozole is my favorite food, it's like a really hot soup with corn hominy. During the summer time, I'll have a ceviche, like a light salad with either fish or shrimp."

Why is celebrating your Latinx heritage important?

Cruz-Pallares: "It's important to me because growing up in Lynden, I didn't really have that much representation. I kind of tried to say, 'Oh, I don't speak Spanish,' when I clearly do. Or, I would say my mom is white but my dad is Mexican. Now that I'm older, I feel like my heritage is really important to me."

Did you celebrate Latinx Heritage Month with the students you work with?

Cruz-Pallares: "I haven't, but I feel like me being a Latinx person in an elementary school is really important for other Latinx students. I would've loved to see someone like me in my elementary school, speaking Spanish to those kids who know Spanish, helping with English -- that's really important."

Did you have any Latinx teachers growing up in Lynden?

Cruz-Pallares: "Not until middle school. And I became very, very close with her. I really would've liked to have seen some representation when I was in elementary school."

Anything else to add?

Cruz-Pallares: "Educating ourselves and students and older adults, making sure they understand Latinx Heritage Month, is really important."