

Spanish Program Expanding Through New Jersey Council for the Humanities

(AUGUST 8, 2013) TRENTON, New Jersey – In the coming fall and spring, nine Gente y Cuentos programs will come to life around the state. These literature reading and discussion programs are run by People & Stories / Gente y Cuentos, a non-profit with a forty year history of seminar-style programs that focus on the short story. The programs are funded by a \$12,825 grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH).

Gente y Cuentos programs will be held at various sites, with senior citizens, parents, and even teenagers in a college preparation program. The participants meet once a week for the eight-week program, and during each session they read and discuss a different short story. From Gabriel García Márquez to Isabel Allende, participants are introduced to authors that most have never read before.

The strength of the program comes during the discussions that follow the readings, when participants engage in grassroots humanities study by finding common threads between their own lives, their fellow readers, and the story. Said one participant in a recent Gente y Cuentos program, “This program helps broaden the understanding of all humans for just about any participant.” Another person described how the program impacted her life, “[I learned] that literature can open many doors between people who come from different backgrounds.”

Supporting People & Stories / Gente y Cuentos’ strategic goal of increasing its Spanish programs, this grant from NJCH allows the organization to increase Spanish programs 50%, initiate partnerships with five new organizations, and spread its work to new populations.

Patricia Andres, Executive Director of People & Stories / Gente y Cuentos, described the impact of the grant, “The New Jersey Council for the Humanities is helping us fulfill a core part of our mission by serving more Spanish-speaking people in the New Jersey. The program was originally founded in Spanish in 1972 and we are delighted that today we are able to connect with more organizations that serve this population.”

About People and Stories / Gente y Cuentos

People & Stories / Gente y Cuentos, a reading and discussion program offered in English or Spanish, creates unique access to literature. Participants draw upon their own experiences to examine and discuss the poetics, issues, and values present in complex short stories. We have a forty year history of offering high quality literature programs at community organizations in and around New Jersey. In 2012, we provided ninety-nine programs and reached over 1,800 individuals through a combination of our local programs and a nation-wide project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. *To learn more, please visit <http://www.peopleandstories.org/>.*