The Atrisco Companies Continue its Giving Ways

What does Central New Mexico Community College, the Albuquerque Isotopes and Americorps members, have in common? The answer; The Atrisco Companies and scholarships that result from their philanthropic efforts. Within The Atrisco Companies, Atrisco Heritage Foundation (AHF) has always had a core objective to provide support to the community, as well as the Atrisco Land Grant heirs. That approach to the organization’s mission has evolved over time adapting and changing to the times. Today, AHF contributes to the wellness of the community through different forms of support.

The Atrisco Heritage Foundation provides support to the community through three separate scholarships programs. In the early years, the company awarded over $300,000 in scholarships to heirs pursuing a college degree or trade school training. However, similar to other companies after the housing market crash, AHF had to discontinue awarding scholarship in that form. But again times have changed and today the company is excited that scholarships are alive and well within the organization. In 2014, the Atrisco Heritage Foundation partnered with Central New Mexico Community College and now has a named endowment agreement. AHF entered into the endowment agreement to establish naming rights on the Student Center at CNM. However, the AHF Endowment provides annual support for various costs related to attending CNM from tuition to books to transportation. In time as the endowment is fully funded it should provide approximately $5,000 in educational scholarship annually at CNM. In addition, the endowment has requirements which provide preference to Atrisco heirs when awarding the scholarships.

Education is such a great gift which is why the Atrisco Companies are in the business of providing educational services to the elementary age students of New Mexico through it’s before and after school services within RGEC. In 2015, the Rio Grande Educational Collaborative (RGEC), partnered with the Albuquerque Isotopes to offer scholarships to young students whom attend RGEC’s after-school services. The funds for this scholarship come from community members who pay to have birthdays and anniversaries announced and recognized on the big screen during baseball games. RGEC then matches the money donated by the Isotopes to create a larger pool of scholarship funds available to families participating in RGEC’s Before and After School Program. Last year over $10,000 was contributed towards tuition helping close to 20 students attend RGEC’s academic based program covering the annual tuition for these students thus providing our service for free.

A third program and partnership has been developed in the past few years within the Atrisco Heritage Foundation. In this effort at providing financial support for education, AHF applied and was awarded the CNCS Americorps grant. This federal grant allows AHF to recruit individuals, students and

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Atrisco Companies have ambition of making Mariachi Spectacular de Albuquerque as recognizable and popular as Balloon Fiesta

As latinos, we may have heard the phrase “Dar el todo por el todo!” Mariachi Spectacular de Albuquerque (MSA) is working toward putting those words into action seeking to build Albuquerque’s own cultural gem into a bigger and better series of events than it already is. Many strategies are being employed to achieve this goal such as unveiling of a new conference location, attracting world renowned Maestros, and new community events offered with the idea of educating more people of this art form and creating a larger support base. In our most recent 2016 Mariachi Spectacular de Albuquerque these strategies were followed and the result was a huge success. Peter Sanchez, CEO of The Atrisco Companies/Mariachi Spectacular, had earlier shared the objective is to “grow Mariachi Spectacular so it is the largest conference and concert series of its type in the United States.” This year MSA attracted over 500 conference attendees, approximately 1,000 participants attended MSAs ancillary events and over 7,000 concert goers were able to experience this spectacular music performances during our annual cultural event. Conference attendees experienced a new location; hundreds of people were introduced for the first time to this art form at events such as La Pasion, Concert Broadcast on the Internet and our very own MSA Hall of Fame induction ceremony; lastly, our music enthusiasts continue to come in increasing numbers to our two concert presentations, the Showcase Concert and the Spectacular Concert.

A NEW LOCATION
This is the first year our location of the prestigious Mariachi Spectacular conference has not been at the University of New Mexico, where the very first conference was held and we have operated since that beginning. This year, however, we moved to the Albuquerque Convention Center. The Atrisco Companies sends a warm thank you to UNM for the last 25 years in which they allowed MSA to graciously use their facility for our music education conference. The benefits of switching to the new location are numerous but the most impactful are the size, location, and capability to grow with this venue capacity. In the center of downtown, attendees and participants are within walking distance from restaurants and tourist attractions. Most importantly, they can walk from their hotel to their classes/workshops and the Showcase Concert. It is also very close to the MSA event La Pasion at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. Convenient is the word that comes to mind as we think of how this new location best describes the experience we offer all conference attendees, their parents and band directors. Simplicity of moving from hotel to most of the events including Hall of Fame, Showcase Concert and of course the music conference itself without the need for auto transportation well it just makes all the difference for the attendees. It also brought Albuquerque’s downtown area alive with music and people for the entire week this past July. Great Move!

SHARING THE ART OF MARIACHI WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
La Pasion, a community event, aims to educate the Albuquerque community about the genre and its marvelous attributes. Our new La Pasion event demonstrates the mariachi genre as more than just music, it is expressed in ways meant to teach and create greater appreciation for the music such as demonstrating the various music styles including Son, Bolero, Huapango and others which showcase different expressions of mariachi from romantic ballads to polka like dance songs. Also, the instrument use and group make-up explain what really comprises a mariachi ensemble. It’s really not three guys in a restaurant folks. Set at a very appropriate locale, Albuquerque’s very own National Hispanic Cultural Center, great music was enjoyed expressing love, culture, sorrow and loss, as well as betrayal. These songs are so passionate that La Pasion attendees could truly understand the music's message even if they spoke no Spanish. There is a common misconception a mariachi group is three guys in a restaurant but listeners learned a typical ensemble is about 15 to 17 members. As well many were unaware that certain instruments are found only in groups performing mariachi music. The music’s art and spirit were beautifully displayed for all to enjoy. This event was a free event open to the public and it will take place during in the future the week of the MSA conference. Mariachi directors demonstrate the instruction of Mariachi music along with informational sessions. The art of Mariachi has various styles of music that continue on page three
“Día de los Muertos”
On the Contrary, a Celebration of Life

We all have someone who has made an impact in our life, shared pearls of wisdom, and with their very presence offered warmth. These are just a few of the many treasures of those who have passed on, yet have added joy, peace, and guidance in our lives in such a meaningful way. We still visit our memories of the rare moments remembering those who have been special to us, as their words come to heart in a time of need. These are the gentle raindrops that make the heart flourish and come to life as a rose petal after the morning rain. Can you picture it? Can you smell the morning dew? Does this almost have the scent of that cologne or perfume that was worn by your special person? Just to think of it makes one stop and take a moment to just…”remember.” Stop and remember that moment in time when whatever was said and done made everything alright. It’s that special quote that would brighten up the day… Now notice that ever so soft tear gently running down the cheek. These are the essentials that bring an appreciation to the great tradition of “Día de los Muertos.”

Día de los Muertos is the very day for a community and families to come together to celebrate the legacy of those who have passed on and to reflect on what’s been given, learned, and applied by having that special person grace this earth with their presence. It’s also provides a moment to reflect on the journey that remains for us to continue, to complete, to start anew, or maybe to evolve because of what has been imparted.

Helping to ensure this ritual remains intact, at the Atrisco Companies and El Campo Santo, we have entrusted this important day of remembrance to “Día de los Muertos.”

On the Contrary, a Celebration of Life
Roberta Ricci has been an Atrisco Companies Board Member since 2013. During this time, she has approached her role as a Board Member in a passionate and determined manner. She has fully embraced the mission of the organization and has proven herself capable of creating and directing cultural elements in both her Board role as well as in her professional life. Roberta also has enjoyed learning about her own heritage as a member of the Atrisco Board which has given her a greater appreciation for her family’s history and the importance of preserving and growing our Atrisco and Hispanic culture. It’s her way of connecting with her personal heritage.

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Roberta has found symmetry being an Atrisco Board Member as it fits well with her own life’s priorities which she continues to demonstrate; a love of culture and a great emphasis towards the importance of education.

In her professional life, Roberta is currently the Director of Development for CNM Foundation, focusing on raising over $1 million to support student scholarships and programs throughout CNM. Prior to this role, she worked as the Senior Alumni Director for the Anderson School of Management at UNM, concentrating on community outreach through alumni engagement and career services that included a mentorship program and ways to build and strengthen relationships between industry and student programs. Roberta started her career in higher education as the Alumni Relations Office for the UNM Alumni Association and worked at the university for over 8 years.

Roberta is a graduate of the University of New Mexico where she has earned a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education and a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration. Her advice to college students is “Never give up.” She says there are so many resources available to help students earn a college degree.
Making Mariachi Spectacular de Albuquerque as recognizable and popular as Balloon Fiesta  
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La Pasion attendees will learn about through lecture and demonstration. As if the music wasn’t enough, attendees were also able to enjoy yummy food and drinks from local vendors. Mariachi Atzlan from South Texas put on an amazing performance to conclude the event and received a standing ovation. What an event to remember and not to miss next year.

**Attracting the Cream of the Crop**

MSA continues to strive to attract world-renowned Mariachi Maestros by building an esteemed conference which warrants their talent and participation. An important ingredient in producing great students is having great Maestros. “We try to make sure we are running the business very well so we can afford to hire and attract the top talent,” said Peter Sanchez. This year we were able to attract about ten master instructors, “Maestros”, among our nearly forty member instructional staff. This is about double the number of our competitor conferences. A Maestro is not just any teacher but someone who has risen to a level of success in the music industry that has warranted a special respect and iconic recognition among their industry and peers. It can be a musician, an arranger, a songwriter or any number of music related roles within the field. We all know or have heard the most important ingredient in the educational process is a great teacher. In teaching music at our mariachi conference this fact is equally true, thus an important piece of the puzzle. The educator is key in a school classroom and as well in the art of Mariachi.

**First Ever Broadcast of Our MSA Showcase Concert**

The Showcase concert draws a large crowd every year as it is sponsored by the City of Albuquerque and is a free public concert displaying the amateur group competition. Typically, the City’s downtown Civic Plaza is packed with over 3,000 concert attendees. The Showcase concert gives the workshop attendees a chance to demonstrate the songs and skills they learned throughout the week. Mariachi groups register in advance to compete against each other during the concert making the quality of the performances outstanding. The music and ambiance make this an event to enjoy by the performers and the audience. There are many people and supporters that cannot attend; however, this year they were able to enjoy it in the luxury of their own homes via our LIVE YouTube broadcast. This meant supporters of these competitors were still able to support them even though they could not physically be at the concert. The Showcase concert broadcast was a great success in this our first year. We reached over 26,000 households around the United States and even some around the world via this Internet broadcast. It was so well received. In addition, exciting and beneficial videos of the broadcast were professionally produced by MSA which can be viewed on the Mariachi Spectacular website as well as on YouTube in perpetuity, long after the conference has past. Not just performances were produced for the benefit of the performing groups but also competing groups were interviewed and gave informational and inspirational pieces for the broadcast. These interviews can be viewed as well by all Mariachi fans on the website too. This is an example of another approach by our organization at spreading the word that the Albuquerque Mariachi conference sets itself apart from all others bringing greater value to conference attendees and their families wherever they may live.

MSA is definitely striving to do everything to the fullest. The plan is to promote the heritage and place no limits on how large this event can become. We are targeting efforts to grow more out of state attendees, more tourists to experience the events and we are also paying attention to our own community and state. MSA continues to grow its social impact and awareness sharing the message the conference is for everyone, those out of state and within. Currently, 80% of conference attendees are from out of state. Peter Sanchez shared, “But we also want to bring Mariachi into the local schools and are currently working on those efforts.” Ultimately, this will allow us to develop Mariachi students and build talent locally. Today, students from all over the U.S. come to Albuquerque to participate in the workshops but we believe we should be equally passionate about this music right here in Albuquerque and New Mexico. Mariachi music is heard but can also be felt by the heart. It is a passionate and beautiful cultural art form. More and more people from all around our City, State, Country and now World have the opportunity to participate in the workshops and the concerts and feel the beauty and spirit of Mariachi. We are certainly shooting for greatness or we might say another way “Ser el mejor o no ser nada.”
There are many exceptional programs in our country delivered by remarkable Non-Profit Organizations all with an admirable objective, mission, and vision. With the Atrisco Heritage Foundation (AHF) there is a request, a need, and a vision all its own. Building a bridge so others can have a better chance at life and career options is more than a duty but a Call to Serve. It is this self-sacrifice that requires one to dig deep and forge a path for others, their community while leaving a legacy for the next generation. Those who serve in AmeriCorp/VISTA often have chosen to leave their own homes, move to a new community to come to work alongside the Atrisco Heritage Foundation to help build those bridges to ensure culture, a people, and community are more than just preserved but make an impact in society and become equal partners in this journey called Life. As AmeriCorp/ VISTA putting their own hands to the plow comes as no easy task. The Atrisco Heritage Foundation, however, with its deep roots in the Albuquerque community has paved a path for AmeriCorp/VISTAs to work on the front line, within the high schools of Albuquerque and surrounding areas. The experience is unique because it offers direct access to the students in need. AmeriCorp/VISTAs serve as mentors, capacity builders, researchers, just to name a few, in an effort to eliminate poverty and other obstacles that hinder growth and sustainability within a community.

The Atrisco Heritage Foundation has developed over the years a host of exceptional programs that are placed into action in High Schools around New Mexico by VISTA personnel. Programs such as “Guide to Greatness” where students and countless others have an opportunity to obtain the essential keys to overcoming obstacles and ascending up a career ladder. A second program involves stories of achievement which are invaluable for students to listen to from those who have come from the same community and succeeded, this is the guidance and support provided in the “Speaker Series” organized by our partner PLC enterprise. Such wisdom and understanding can be gained from those who return and speak to those in a place where it all began. Then another great program one must not forget “Running Start for Careers” part of the Mayor/Governor Initiative that gives high school students an open door into various career fields that are in demand before entering into college. Lastly, a more recent program developed has been a response to employers who are making comment that our youth today are not as socially adept as past generations likely as a result of the digital age they were raised in. No matter the reason, the Atrisco Heritage Foundation has developed an age appropriate “Professional Development” program which offers our youth something they might not receive until much later in life. A particular focus on soft skills which are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person’s relationships with other people. In the workplace, soft skills are considered a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's technical knowledge and occupational skills. Soft skills are personal attributes that indicate a high level of emotional intelligence. Moreover, soft skills are broadly applicable across job titles and industries. This particular program gives our young students a chance to increase their skill set which will equally increase their ability to flourish in the workplace.

Each of the aforementioned programs combine with the program execution and support of AmeriCorp/VISTAs who are passionate in their work and believe in the mission of Atrisco. All of this leads to a level of community support for our children that is sure to improve outcomes as our youth transition into adulthood. Being able to show others that there is a way to achieve goals and fulfill a destiny, illuminate a path of purpose, and overcome fear. To plant, to water, to assist and fulfill a destiny, illuminate a path of purpose, and overcome fear. To plant, to water, to assist in the cultivation of a future harvest is the life of an AmeriCorp/VISTA. Becoming a part of that arena that bridges the gap is what they do, what they live for….It’s how they serve…It’s a perfect alignment of goals. It’s the Atrisco Interest and it’s the VISTA Experience.

We are not alone in the practice of these sacred rituals. This beautiful tradition and its personal nuances are embedded in many religions and cultures. Although the origins of this special day are rooted in Latin and more recently Mexican cultures, there are many other cultures that have similar rituals. According to the Japanese way of life, loved one are honored as lit candles illuminate lanterns and set to rise as it graces the sky. In Catholicism a special mass is attended and prayers are made for the beloved and candles are lit. In Judaism lighting a 24 hour candle is, and prayers are said on the anniversary of the passing of the loved one. Although there are countless similar traditions the principal is the same and that is “Love and Remembrance.”

The Atrisco Companies and El Campo Santo are very happy to bring to our community this day to remember our loved ones. We do it in a way that is highly unique practicing our tradition literally in the cemetery so a closeness to the presence of those who have past can be felt. Preserving this tradition is paramount to celebrating the wonderful lives of those who have shared so much with us to ensure we were the best we could be. It is only fitting that we love and remember our family and friends on such a special day. Día de los Muertos...an Atrisco Tradition!
Profile of an Atrisqueña
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She is also Chair of the Hispanic Philanthropic Society through United Way of Central New Mexico and Board Secretary of Nuestras Valores Charter High School. She has also done voluntary work for the UNM Alumni Association’s Homecoming Committee, Lobo Living Room Committee and Scholarship Selection Committee. Through these volunteer roles, she has initiated a campus-wide community service program “Roll for the Cause” supporting the Ronald McDonald Charities of New Mexico and the Albuquerque Public Schools Homeless Project.

Roberta’s involvement in the Lobo Living Room Committee gave her the opportunity to work alongside Atrisco Companies management to collaborate and ultimately create La Pasion de Mariachi. The La Pasion de Mariachi event is today a component of the series of events during Mariachi Spectacular’s week of festivities. The purpose of Las Pasion de Mariachi is to educate and entertain the Albuquerque community to better understand and appreciate this cultural art form. Roberta was instrumental in getting the event launched originally on UNM’s campus as it was included in the Lobo Living Room series in 2015. Last year to accommodate larger audiences Mariachi Spectacular moved this event to the National Hispanic Cultural Center. She is thrilled to use her connections and resources to grow the vision of Mariachi Spectacular and hopefully one day make it as grand as The Balloon Fiesta.

Roberta is married to Keith Ricci and they have two daughters, Marissa 23 and Elena 18. She was born and raised in Albuquerque’s South Valley, graduated from Rio Grande High School, and is an Atrisco Land Grant heir on both her mother’s and father’s side. During her free time Roberta enjoys spending time with her family and attending live music events.

“Roberta has been a great asset to the Atrisco Board” said Peter Sanchez. “She is inspired and motivated by the very values that are the core mission of the Atrisco organization. It’s a perfect fit.”

Before and After School Programs
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