

EXITO

GPHCC BUSINESS JOURNAL

SHAPING SKYLINES: LATINOS IN THE CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN INDUSTRY

FOSTERING GROWTH IN MONTCO



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Director of Design & Production: Jenée Chizick Agüero
Project Manager, Digital: Brandon Cisneros
Photography, Cover and Feature Photography:
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 02 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
- 03 ABOUT GPHCC
- 04 FOSTERING GROWTH: INSIGHTS FROM NELLY JIMENEZ-AREVALO ON LATINO ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY
- 06 GPHCC PROGRAM NEWS
- 08 MAXIMIZING YOUR BANK BRANCH EXPERIENCE
- 09 BOARD MEMBER PROFILES
- 10 NAVIGATING SUCCESS IN CONSTRUCTION: LESSONS FROM JOE SANTIAGO
- 12 Q&A WITH DAVID MIRABAL: EMPOWERING LATINO CONTRACTORS IN PHILADELPHIA
- 15 GPHCC'S B2B LATINO INITIATIVE: LEVERAGING CONNECTIONS FOR GROWTH
- 16 DINE LATINO RESTAURANT WEEK: A FLAVORFUL SUCCESS!
- 18 FEAST AT THESE LATINO-OWNED RESTAURANTS IN PHILLY
- 19 PHILADELPHIA'S TOP INFLUENCER RECOMMENDS THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER
- 20 SMART MOVES: ESSENTIAL HOME BUYING AND SELLING TIPS



David Mirabal (left) and Joe Santiago

- 21 BEAUTY ENTREPRENEUR GROWS WITH SOCIAL
- 22 CAMINO AL ÉXITO GRAD PIVOTS
- 23 STRIKING THE BALANCE: FINDING WORK-LIFE HARMONY AS A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER
- 24 ALL HEART WITHOUT THE STRESS
- 25 UNITY IN PROSPERITY: CHAMBERS UNITE TO EMPOWER SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS
- 26 MEMBERS IN FOCUS
- 28 GPHCC SMALL BUSINESS MEMBER UPDATES

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear readers,

Welcome to the second issue of *Exito*, the business journal of the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. At *Exito*, our mission is clear: to elevate the profile of Latino entrepreneurs and GPHCC members while celebrating their accomplishments, sharing their stories, and providing valuable insights into the spirit of entrepreneurship in our region.

In this issue, we proudly showcase the journeys of participants in our small business education programs, highlighting their resilience, innovation, and dedication to success. These stories exemplify the optimism, hard work, and grit that drives our community forward.

We feature an exclusive interview with Nely Jiménez-Arevalo, Executive Director and CEO of Aclamo, as she shares her vision for the growing Hispanic business community of Montgomery County. Her leadership and passion serve as an inspiration to us all.

Additionally, we are excited to share content from esteemed chamber members, offering valuable

resources and expertise for our readers to engage, connect, and thrive in the business world.

At *Exito*, we believe that by amplifying the voices and experiences of Latino entrepreneurs and GPHCC members, we can foster greater awareness, collaboration, and support within our community. Together, we are building a more inclusive and prosperous business landscape for all.

Thank you for joining us on this most recent journey of empowerment, inspiration, and growth. Together, we will continue to elevate the profile of Latino entrepreneurs and GPHCC members, creating a brighter future for generations to come.

Saludos,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rodríguez'.

Jennifer I. Rodríguez, MCP
GPHCC President & CEO
Editor-in-Chief

GPHCC BY THE NUMBERS

100%

of alumni report they are "Likely" or "Very Likely" to recommend the Accelerate Business program to a fellow business owner.

89%

of Accelerate Business alumni report being profitable.

88%

of Accelerate Business alumni report increased or maintained annual revenue.

83%

of GPHCC membership consists of small businesses and individuals.

79

The number of referrals generated each day, on average, from GPHCC's directory during the first quarter of 2024.

7,175

The total number of referrals generated from GPHCC's website directory during the first quarter of 2024.

65%

The open rate of GPHCC's Small Business Member Newsletter.

18,743

The number of GPHCC website page views during the first quarter of 2024.

ABOUT THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



GREATER PHILADELPHIA
HISPANIC CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

Entrepreneurship is not a DIY project; it is a community-wide effort. Whether you are a business owner, contract with a business, or buy from a business, there is a role for each of us to play as we build a strong, local business sector.

Overview

Established in 1990, the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GPHCC) is a not-for-profit organization devoted to promoting the advancement and economic growth of Hispanic businesses and professionals in the greater Philadelphia region. We accomplish this through educational programs and a broad range of services and special events. The GPHCC proactively serves a diverse membership—consisting of entrepreneurs, Latino businesses, Latino professionals, corporations, and government—with the overriding goal of helping these critical constituencies capitalize on the many opportunities their diversity, enhanced by our Latino multicultural mix, offers.

Our Mission

GPHCC develops, promotes, and advocates for Hispanic businesses in the Greater Philadelphia Region while encouraging the advancement and economic growth of the Hispanic community.

FOSTERING GROWTH: INSIGHTS FROM NELLY JIMENEZ-AREVALO ON LATINO ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY



An interview with Nelly Jiménez-Arévalo, Executive Director & CEO of ACLAMO

ACLAMO provides educational programs, social services, and access to health and wellness programs to Latinos and other community members, empowering them to fully achieve their life potential. With three offices in Norristown, Pottstown, and Lansdale, the organization collaborates with a network of local partners to bring the Latino community to light in key conversations. Exito interviewed Nelly Jiménez-Arévalo, Executive Director & CEO of ACLAMO, about the state of Latino businesses in Montgomery County.

What excites you about Latino entrepreneurship in your community?

Well, I think what excites me is witnessing the vitality of our Latino community. Every morning, they rise early, breathe life into once-desolate areas, and nurture businesses that inject vibrancy into our neighborhoods.

Can you share examples of this revitalization?

Certainly. Take Marshall Street, for instance. Previously, it was marked by empty storefronts and fading memories. Much like in the Italian Market in South Philadelphia, our community has transformed neglected spaces into thriving hubs of activity. It's a testament to the resilience and ingenuity of immigrant entrepreneurs.

What factors contribute to the growth of Latino-owned businesses in Montgomery County?

Our community's entrepreneurial spirit knows no bounds. Whether hailing from Puebla, Mexico, or the Dominican Republic, immigrants bring their unique talents and traditions, enriching our neighborhoods with their businesses.

What challenges do Latino entrepreneurs face in accessing resources and support?

Navigating bureaucratic hurdles and language barriers remains a significant challenge. Many entrepreneurs struggle to access financial resources and encounter difficulties communicating with government agencies.

How can the community at large contribute to the success of Latino-owned businesses?

It's about creating a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and supported. Whether through patronage, advocacy, or collaboration, we can all play a role in nurturing a thriving ecosystem of Latino entrepreneurship.

Any final thoughts on the future of Latino entrepreneurship in Montgomery County?

As long as there's passion, resilience, and a sense of community, the possibilities are endless. Our Latino entrepreneurs have already proven their ability to transform spaces and defy expectations. With continued support and collaboration, their impact will only grow stronger.

FOMENTAR EL CRECIMIENTO: REFLEXIONES DE NELLY JIMÉNEZ-ARÉVALO SOBRE EL EMPRENDIMIENTO LATINO EN EL CONDADO DE MONTGOMERY

**Entrevista con Nelly Jiménez-Arévalo,
Directora Ejecutiva y CEO de ACLAMO**

ACLAMO ofrece programas educativos, servicios sociales y acceso a programas de salud y bienestar a latinos y otros miembros de la comunidad, empoderándolos para alcanzar su pleno potencial. Con oficinas en Norristown, Pottstown y Lansdale, la organización colabora con una red de colaboradores para dar visibilidad a la comunidad latina en conversaciones clave. Exito entrevistó a Nelly Jiménez-Arévalo, Directora Ejecutiva y CEO de ACLAMO, sobre lo que están haciendo las empresas latinas en el condado de Montgomery.

¿Qué te entusiasma del emprendimiento latino en tu comunidad?

Bueno, creo que lo que me entusiasma es ser testigo de la vitalidad de nuestra comunidad latina. Cada mañana los emprendedores se levantan temprano, le dan vida a zonas antes desoladas y desarrollan negocios que inyectan energía a nuestros barrios.

¿Puedes darnos ejemplos de esta revitalización?

Claro. Por ejemplo, la calle Marshall. Antes se asociaba a escaparates vacíos y recuerdos olvidados. Al igual que el mercado italiano del sur de Filadelfia, nuestra comunidad ha transformado espacios relegados al abandono en prósperos centros de actividad. Es un testimonio de la resiliencia y el ingenio de los emprendedores inmigrantes.

¿Qué factores contribuyen al crecimiento de las empresas de propietarios latinos en el condado de Montgomery?

El espíritu emprendedor de nuestra comunidad no conoce límites. Ya provengan de Puebla, México, o la República Dominicana, los inmigrantes aportan sus capacidades y tradiciones únicas, enriqueciendo nuestros barrios con sus negocios.

¿Qué dificultades enfrentan los emprendedores latinos para acceder a recursos y apoyo?

Superar los obstáculos burocráticos y las barreras lingüísticas sigue siendo un importante desafío. A muchos emprendedores les cuesta acceder a recursos financieros y también comunicarse con los organismos gubernamentales.

¿Cómo ves el futuro del emprendimiento latino en el condado de Montgomery?

Veo un futuro lleno de posibilidades. Defendiendo la accesibilidad lingüística y la simplificación de procesos, y fomentando un entorno de integración, podemos garantizar que las empresas de propietarios latinos sigan prosperando y contribuyendo al dinamismo de nuestra comunidad.

¿Qué iniciativas hay en marcha para apoyar a los emprendedores latinos?

Estamos explorando vías para empoderar a los emprendedores, desde leyes de negocios artesanales hasta programas de capacitación digital. Al equiparlos con las herramientas y los recursos que necesitan, estamos facilitando su camino al éxito.

¿Cómo puede contribuir la comunidad en general al éxito de las empresas de propietarios latinos?

Se trata de crear un ambiente de negocios favorable en el que todos se sientan valorados y apoyados. Ya sea a través del consumo, la promoción o la colaboración, todos podemos aportar a un ecosistema próspero de emprendimiento latino.

¿Alguna reflexión final sobre el futuro del emprendimiento latino en el condado de Montgomery?

Mientras haya pasión, resiliencia y sentido de comunidad, las posibilidades son infinitas. Nuestros emprendedores latinos ya han demostrado su capacidad para transformar lugares y desafiar expectativas. Con apoyo y colaboración sostenidos, su impacto no hará sino aumentar.

GPHCC PROGRAM NEWS: SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAT HELP BUSINESSES START, GROW AND SCALE

GPHCC programs provide business owners with the strategy, management know-how, and networks needed to think like a CEO, grow revenue, increase jobs, and become contract-ready to do business with the region's companies, government, and institutions.

CHISPA Workshops

In collaboration with member businesses, GPHCC provides critical information for Latino entrepreneurs in a webinar format. From finance to marketing, business owners can learn how to take their business a step forward with the topics presented in CHISPA workshops.

Accelerate Business

Accelerate Business gives business owners the knowledge, management know-how, and networks needed to think like a CEO, grow revenue,



Accelerate graduates at GPHCC's 2024 Annual Meeting



2023 Excelencia in Hispanic Business Awardees

increase jobs, and be contract-capable and procurement-ready to do business with large companies.

Build Latino

Our Spanish language program helps emerging contractors develop business fundamentals and practices necessary to avoid the common pitfalls of the industry and successfully compete for contracts. The program includes the only OSHA10 certification classes taught in Spanish in Philadelphia.

Camino al Exito

This program employs the Kauffman Foundation's FastTrac curriculum to help startups and early-stage businesses bring their ideas to life. The course is in Spanish and is offered in partnership with the Widener University Small Business Development Center. Entrepreneurs explore their business ideas and their skills as a potential business owner to create a roadmap for success.

Photo by Contigo Photography

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MAXIMIZING YOUR BANK BRANCH EXPERIENCE

JP MORGAN CHASE



By Diedra Porche, Head of Community and Business Development at Chase

In a world of online tools that let you make banking transactions, visiting a branch might seem unnecessary. However, your local branch can offer the opportunity to build valuable relationships with people who can help you achieve financial independence.

How can a customer feel connected to a bank branch?

I love that question because we ask ourselves the same thing every day. Being part of the community means meeting with local leaders to find out what they need from us and designing our branches around that. For example, at some of our community branches, we have a “living room” where we can host financial workshops, small business pop-up shops, or meetings with nonprofit organizations. We also hire locally. You feel much more connected talking about financial aspirations with people from your community who went to the same high school, place of worship, or recreation center down the street where you grew up.

How can I build a relationship with my bank?

Customers should feel comfortable sharing their goals, needs, and wants with their banker. Also, it helps to remember the Community Manager is there to help solve your financial challenges and build a roadmap for success. You might have a

goal to open a business, build your credit, become debt-free, buy a home, or save for retirement; our community team can help. At Chase, we strive to make dreams possible for everyone, everywhere, every day. Your financial future starts with building those relationships.

What's one perception about banking that you'd like to change?

I think folks are surprised that so many resources are available and accessible both at our branches and online. Outside of what we offer in-branch, our teams work with local neighborhood partners who provide various services to support the community, businesses, and residents. I had a unique piece of feedback from an employee who started with the bank and had lived in the same community his whole life. When he visited his local community branch, he said, “Diedra, when I walked in, I felt dignified.” Every time I recount that story, it warms my heart because that’s what we want—we want our centers to belong to the community.

BOARD MEMBER PROFILES



LYDIA HOLIAT
Vice President and Portfolio
Manager at the Haverford
Trust Company
GPHCC Board Chair

As Vice President and Portfolio Manager at the Haverford Trust Company, Lydia has dedicated her career to helping individuals, families, and nonprofits achieve financial wellness. With over a decade of experience managing relationships and investment portfolios, she has earned a reputation for her expertise, integrity, and commitment to client success. Lydia's commitment to service and leadership has been recognized by the Philadelphia Business Journal, which named her a 2021 Women of Distinction honoree. She holds a bachelor's degree in finance and marketing from Lehigh University and is a graduate of the Villanova Executive MBA program. Lydia brings a wealth of experience and a passion for financial education and management experience to her new role and will be instrumental in driving the organization forward.

What excites me about being GPHCC Board Chair:

The role is exciting and an honor. It made me pause and think back to my journey at GPHCC, which started over a decade ago in the Latina Leadership Forums. The chamber has evolved and grown significantly. Having a view of our history and thinking about the future is a balancing act. It's not about throwing out the old and in with the new. It's about continuing to fine-tune what is working and having the ability to adapt and flex with new ideas. I am excited to try those new ideas, learn from our combined experiences, and hope to inspire the next generation of leaders.

What role do I see GPHCC play in the business landscape:

We continue to broaden and augment the voice of the Hispanic business community in the region and engage those business owners to celebrate and build our network of members. In essence, we are creating a *familia* of business owners to forge connections and elevate ourselves, creating value for the GPHCC member through tangible metrics such as events, continuing education, and business relationships. But we are also creating value through an intangible viewpoint: a place to grow not only your balance sheets but also your personal strengths.



JIMMY CONTRERAS
Vice President, US Regional
Communications,
JP Morgan Chase
GPHCC Board Parliamentarian

Contreras leads regional communications for JPMorgan Chase in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and South New Jersey. He is a creative strategist and storyteller with comprehensive experience shaping and protecting corporate image while promoting business values and missions. He is highly skilled in lifestyle branding, launching fashion, hospitality destinations, and cultural institutions through thoughtful communications, marketing, and social media campaigns. He is a committed volunteer and board member for organizations promoting arts and culture, improving underserved communities, and minority-owned businesses in the Greater Philadelphia region.

NAVIGATING
SUCCESS IN
CONSTRUCTION:
LESSONS FROM JOE SANTIAGO,
OWNER OF JJS PROPERTY
SERVICES



In the realm of construction, Joe Santiago shines as a model of resilience. As the owner of JJS Property Services, his journey is characterized by strategic networking, collaborative partnerships, and a commitment to continuous education. Let's explore Santiago's insights, focusing on his milestones, strategies, and advice for aspiring entrepreneurs in the industry.

Milestones and Strategies

Santiago recently secured a contract for 21 buildings in the Naval Yard, a testament to his expertise and dedication. He attributes this success to persistent networking and consistent attendance at crucial events. Santiago emphasizes the importance of these connections, viewing each interaction as an opportunity to expand horizons.

Collaborative partnerships, like his alliance with WC Construction, have been pivotal. By leveraging each other's strengths, they deliver seamless projects, prioritizing client satisfaction.

Investing in Education

Santiago's pursuit of excellence extends to continuous learning. Programs like Build Latino and

Accelerate Business, offered by the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, have provided invaluable business management skills.

"As an owner of a company, you are the accountant, you are the payroll, you are the owner, you are the manager, you are the employee, and you carry all these different hats. The Accelerate Business program teaches you how to remove yourself as the employee and understand how to run your company on the back end." The Accelerate Business program taught him to run his company efficiently, freeing him from the burden of handling every aspect.

"Education is key," Santiago emphasizes. "It equips you with the tools to not only navigate your business but also to innovate and adapt to evolving market dynamics."

Navigating the Terrain

Education, Santiago stresses, equips entrepreneurs with the tools to innovate and adapt.

"Building lasting relationships is paramount," he advises. "It's about more than securing the first contract; it's about consistently delivering quality service and fostering trust with clients."

Photography by Messina Martinez Photography

Santiago's journey serves as a testament to perseverance, collaboration, and commitment to excellence. His story inspires entrepreneurs across sectors, illustrating that success is attainable with the right blend of skill and determination.

As Santiago continues navigating the construction landscape, his journey provides an example for those embarking on similar paths. With dedication and diligence, success becomes not just a destination but a journey of continuous growth and achievement.

NAVEGANDO EL ÉXITO EN LA CONSTRUCCIÓN: REFLEXIONES DE JOE SANTIAGO, DUEÑO DE JJS PROPERTY SERVICES

En el ámbito de la construcción, Joe Santiago brilla como un ejemplo de resiliencia. Dueño de JJS Property Services, su trayectoria se caracteriza por la creación de redes estratégicas, la colaboración y un compromiso con la educación continua. exploremos la experiencia de Santiago, con atención a sus estrategias, puntos de inflexión y consejos para quienes busquen emprender en el sector.

Estrategias y puntos de inflexión

Recientemente, Santiago firmó un contrato para trabajar en el edificio número 21 del Astillero Naval, prueba de su experiencia y dedicación. Atribuye este logro a la persistencia en la creación de redes profesionales y a la asistencia regular a eventos empresariales. Santiago subraya la importancia de estas conexiones, considerando cada interacción como una oportunidad para ampliar horizontes.

Las colaboraciones formalizadas, como su alianza con WC Construction, han sido fundamentales. Aprovechando los puntos fuertes de cada compañía, realizan los proyectos sin obstáculos, dando prioridad a la satisfacción del cliente.

Invertir en educación

La búsqueda de la excelencia en Santiago se extiende al aprendizaje continuo. Programas como Build Latino, ofrecido por la Cámara de Comercio Hispana de la Región de Filadelfia, le han proporcionado conocimientos invaluable sobre la administración de empresas.

"Si tienes un negocio, eres el contable, el encargado de las nóminas, el dueño, el gerente, el

empleado, y llevas todos esos diferentes roles. El programa Accelerate Business te enseña a dejar de ser el empleado y a entender cómo dirigir tu empresa de una posición estratégica". El programa Accelerate Business le enseñó a dirigir su empresa con eficacia, liberándose de la carga de ocuparse de todos los frentes.

"La educación es clave", enfatiza Santiago. "Te da las herramientas no solo para dirigir tu empresa, sino también para innovar y adaptarse a la dinámica cambiante del mercado".

Navegar el terreno

La educación, enfatiza Santiago, da a los emprendedores herramientas para innovar y adaptarse.

"Construir relaciones duraderas es fundamental", aconseja. "No se trata solo de conseguir el primer contrato; se trata de ofrecer constantemente un servicio de calidad y desarrollar la confianza con los clientes".

La trayectoria de Santiago es un testimonio de perseverancia, colaboración y compromiso con la excelencia. Su historia inspira a emprendedores de todos los sectores y demuestra que el éxito es posible con la combinación adecuada de habilidad y determinación.

Mientras Santiago sigue navegando el panorama de la construcción, su trayectoria sirve como un ejemplo para quienes emprenden caminos similares. Con dedicación y esmero, el éxito se convierte no solo en un destino, sino en un recorrido de crecimiento y logros continuos.

Q&A WITH
 DAVID MIRABAL:
 EMPOWERING LATINO
 CONTRACTORS IN PHILADELPHIA



David Mirabal is the CEO and founder of Green North Studio LLC. The design firm documents existing buildings for many realtors and others around Philadelphia. Green North Studio also works on small design projects in support of larger architectural firms. With over 25 years of experience, Mirabal and his team have completed over 650 commercial and residential projects in Puerto Rico and the mainland US. Clients include Marriott Hotels, McDonald’s Puerto Rico, and Ashford Presbyterian Hospital, among others.

Could you share a bit about your background and how you came to Philadelphia?

Certainly. I began as a drafter in Puerto Rico in 1986, but after Hurricane Maria, we moved to Philadelphia due to the economic downturn. It was challenging at first, but connections through the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce helped kickstart my career here.

What inspired you to get involved with the Build Latino program as an instructor and curriculum consultant?

I noticed a gap in programs tailored for Latino contractors, particularly those working on smaller projects. Together with Jennifer Rodriguez, we researched existing programs and developed Build

Latino, focusing on providing education and structure to emerging contractors who may not have access to such resources in Spanish.

How does Build Latino support contractors?

We offer education on construction estimating, legal aspects, accounting, and plan interpretation in Spanish. Feedback has been positive, with participants expressing newfound understanding and appreciation for these aspects of running a business.

What factors contribute to the success of construction businesses?

Continuous education is crucial. Staying updated on global events impacting material prices and maintaining honesty in your work are key. Competitive pricing and delivering quality work build a positive reputation, leading to referrals and further business opportunities.

What have you learned from program participants?

They’ve taught me the importance of finding a balance between professional success and personal fulfillment. Success isn’t solely measured in revenue but also in the ability to prioritize family and other aspects of life. Both approaches to business—whether focusing on stability or growth—are valid.

ENTREVISTA CON DAVID MIRABAL: EMPODERANDO A LOS CONTRATISTAS LATINOS DE FILADELFIA

David Mirabal es fundador y CEO de Green North Studio LLC. La empresa de diseño documenta edificios existentes para diversos agentes de bienes raíces y otras entidades de Filadelfia. Green North Studio también trabaja en pequeños proyectos de diseño, colaborando con firmas de arquitectura mayores. Con más de 25 años de experiencia, Mirabal y su equipo han realizado más de 650 proyectos comerciales y residenciales en Puerto Rico y Estados Unidos. Entre sus clientes figuran Marriott Hotels, McDonald's Puerto Rico y el Hospital Presbiteriano Ashford.

¿Podrías hablarnos un poco de tus orígenes y de cómo llegaste a Filadelfia?

Claro. Empecé como delineante en Puerto Rico en 1986, pero tras el huracán María, debido a la recesión económica, nos trasladamos a Filadelfia. Al principio fue difícil, pero los contactos que establecí a través de la Cámara de Comercio Hispana de la Región de Filadelfia (GPHCC) me ayudaron a poner en marcha mi carrera aquí.

¿Qué te inspiró a involucrarte en el programa Build Latino como instructor y consultor de currículo?

Me di cuenta de que había un vacío en los programas dirigidos a los contratistas latinos, sobre todo a los que trabajan en proyectos pequeños. Junto con Jennifer Rodríguez, estudiamos programas existentes y desarrollamos Build Latino, concentrándonos en ofrecer formación y estructura a contratistas que quizá no tienen acceso a esos recursos en español.

¿Qué apoyo da Build Latino a los contratistas?

Ofrecemos capacitación sobre presupuestos de construcción, cuestiones legales, contabilidad e interpretación de planos. La respuesta ha sido positiva, y los participantes dicen que se llevan una nueva comprensión y valoración de estos aspectos para llevar adelante una empresa.

¿Qué factores contribuyen al éxito de las empresas de la construcción?

La educación continua es crucial. Estar al tanto de los acontecimientos mundiales y cómo afectan los precios de los materiales y mantener una ética profesional son elementos clave. Ofrecer precios competitivos y un trabajo de calidad forjan una reputación positiva que da lugar a referidos y a nuevas oportunidades de negocio.

¿Qué has aprendido de los participantes del programa?

Me han enseñado la importancia de encontrar un equilibrio entre el éxito profesional y la realización personal. El éxito no se mide únicamente por los ingresos, sino también por la capacidad de dar prioridad a la familia y a otros aspectos de la vida. Ambos enfoques del negocio, uno centrado en la estabilidad y otro en el crecimiento, son válidos.

BUILD LATINO

COMENZANDO EN OTOÑO 2024

PROGRAMA DE CAPACITACIÓN PARA
EMPRESARIOS EN LA CONSTRUCCIÓN



SOLICITA HOY

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GPHCC'S B2B LATINO INITIATIVE: LEVERAGING CONNECTIONS FOR GROWTH

In the bustling landscape of business networking, the ability to turn relationships into sales is the key to success. Recognizing this, the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GPHCC) created a pilot program last year to help small business members mine the chamber network for business development opportunities. The effort evolved into Latino B2B, a referral exchange program with the goal of helping Latino entrepreneurs develop business opportunities by sharing referrals with other chamber members. Two groups meet virtually on a monthly basis, with in-person networking opportunities scheduled throughout the year.

The pilot, designed to be action-driven yet manageable, started with an inaugural group launching its monthly meet-ups virtually. The success of these gatherings spurred the creation of a second group, amplifying the network effect within the chamber community. Julissa Almonte-Espinal, co-owner of Innovech Software and chair of one of the referral groups, confirms, "99% of our business has come through referrals," highlighting the paramount importance of networking in fostering business growth.

Despite the evidence, many Latino entrepreneurs may not be fully harnessing the potential of referrals. Latino B2B bridges this gap by providing a dedicated platform for entrepreneurs to forge productive connections and cultivate lucrative

relationships. Beyond referral exchanges, the group fosters enduring professional bonds, nurtures vital business acumen, and facilitates exposure through monthly business showcases.

The benefits extend beyond the monthly sessions, offering members opportunities to host business webinars and workshops, enriching the collective expertise of the chamber. With a modest commitment of just an hour per month and no additional membership costs, Latino B2B represents GPHCC's commitment to providing great value for its small business members.

Testimonials from participants underscore the transformative impact of Latino B2B on their entrepreneurial journeys. Dinette Rivera, echoing the sentiments of many, shares her experience of securing referrals and gaining a paid vendor slot within a few months of joining. Amaury Abreu, a marketing consultant and owner of Kommunity, credits his business's ascent to new connections and referral partnerships forged through Latino B2B.

For Latino entrepreneurs eager to harness the power of referrals and cultivate enduring business partnerships, this program is a must.

For more information about B2B Latino, email msoto@philahispanicchamber.org.

DINE LATINO RESTAURANT WEEK: A FLAVORFUL SUCCESS!

At the heart of the Dine Latino Restaurant Week initiative lies a commitment to shining a spotlight on the rich variety of Latino-owned food establishments. Held biannually in spring and fall since 2020, the event consistently features over two dozen independent and locally-owned restaurants. The initiative attracts award-winning restaurants and chefs, elevating the event's profile and bringing well-deserved attention to the culinary excellence within the Latino community. The tangible benefits are reflected in the reports from participating restaurants, citing either maintained or increased revenue and an expanded clientele directly attributable to the campaign.

This spring, the campaign was sponsored by CSAA and Visit Philadelphia. The media partnership with Rumba 106.1, an iHeart station, brought a concert ticket giveaway to participating restaurant El Sarape in Blue Bell. Along with strategic press and



influencer placements by Cashman & Associates, a prominent PR and marketing firm in Philadelphia, the campaign reached millions.

Dine Latino Restaurant Week has extended its reach to customers in neighboring counties by moving further into the Greater Philadelphia Region to locations such as Chadd's Ford, Blue Bell, Ambler, and Deptford, NJ. This edition also introduced an experiential component with the addition of a chef's tasting event.

The upcoming fall edition of Dine Latino Restaurant Week is expected to garner great notoriety as it will run September 15-21, 2024, kicking off Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations. Foodies, mark your calendars!

Recruitment for participating restaurants is happening now at www.dinelatinophl.com.



Photography by @josheatsphilly, @lowermerionfoodie and Jose Urdaneta

DINE LATINO RESTAURANT WEEK: ¡UN DELICIOSO ÉXITO!

En el corazón de la iniciativa Dine Latino Restaurant Week está el compromiso de destacar la rica diversidad de los restaurantes de dueños latinos. Este evento, que se celebra cada año en primavera y otoño desde 2020, incluye restaurantes independientes de propietarios locales. La iniciativa atrae a restaurantes y chefs galardonados que elevan el perfil del evento, atrayendo la merecida atención a la excelencia culinaria de la comunidad latina. Los beneficios tangibles se reflejan en los informes de los restaurantes participantes, los cuales indican el mantenimiento o el aumento de ventas y crecimiento de la clientela, atribuidos directamente a la campaña.

Esta primavera, la campaña fue patrocinada por el grupo CSAA y Visit Philadelphia. En asociación con Rumba 106.1, emisora de iHeart, se regalaron entradas para un concierto, el cual fue ofrecido en El Sarape Blue Bell, uno de los participantes

de Dine Latino Restaurant Week. La campaña llegó a millones de personas gracias a la estrategia de prensa e influencers implementada por Cashman & Associates, una destacada empresa de relaciones públicas y marketing de Filadelfia.

Esta edición añadió un componente, la degustación de chefs, al

mismo tiempo que tuvo mayor alcance en lugares del área metropolitana de Filadelfia, como Chadd's Ford, Blue Bell, Ambler y Deptford, NJ, así extendiendo la experiencia a consumidores en los condados circunvecinos.

Se espera que la edición de otoño gane mayor notoriedad, ya que se celebrará del 15 al 21 de septiembre de 2024, dando comienzo a las celebraciones del Mes de la Herencia Hispana. Foodies, ¡vayan agendando!

El reclutamiento de restaurantes para participar se está llevando a cabo ahora en www.dinelatinophl.com.



Photography by @kidfriendlyphilly and Visit Philadelphia

FEAST AT THESE LATINO-OWNED RESTAURANTS IN PHILLY

VISIT PHILADELPHIA



From Kensington to South Philly, delicious Latin food is everywhere you go. That's thanks to the city's vibrant multiethnic and multiracial restaurant owners, who bring culture, heritage, and big flavor to each dish. Hungry diners across Philadelphia can support Latino-owned restaurants while sampling authentic eats, James Beard-nominated cooking, and so much more.

Amy's Pastelillos, 2001 Memphis Street

Amy Rivera Nassar brings her Puerto Rican-style turnovers to a brand-new Fishtown brick-and-mortar spot focusing on takeout lunch. On the menu: pastelillos in new and classic flavors, rice bowls, and specials.

Bar Bombón, 133 S. 18th Street

The aesthetic may be inspired by Old San Juan, but the all-vegan menu is thoroughly modern. Patrons enjoy Latin American food with a twist, along with flavorful margaritas available by the glass or pitcher.

Blue Corn Mexican Restaurant & Bar, 940 S. 9th Street

The Sandoval family serves spot-on preparations of huitlacoche (corn mushroom) quesadillas and Puerto Vallarta tacos (overflowing with shrimp, crab, and other fish) at this South 9th Street Italian Market favorite. Much of the menu is served in signature blue tortillas made with cornmeal.

Bolo, 2025 Sansom Street

Chef Yun Fuentes' Latin American restaurant and rum bar opened in 2023 and has already earned Fuentes an Emerging Chef nomination in the James Beard Awards. The menu celebrates Puerto Rican culture with a slew of ceviches, snacks, pinchos, main dishes, and desserts.

Cantina La Martina, 2800 D Street

Chef Dionicio Jimenez brings his Mexico City heritage to Kensington at the lauded Cantina La

Martina with a menu featuring aguachile and ceviche specialties. Jimenez and his restaurant earned James Beard nominations in 2023 and 2024.

Casa México & South Philly Barbacoa, 1134 S. 9th Street

A prominent figure in Philly's food scene, Cristina Martínez is an outstanding chef and an outspoken activist. She's racked up numerous national accolades over the years with South Philly Barbacoa, which now operates from a cart inside Casa México four days a week. Martínez's star-making Mexican menu features chicken enmoladas and mole with pork.

Charlie Was a Sinner., 131 S. 13th Street

Hip, candlelit, and craft cocktail-laden are all perfect ways to describe this vegan restaurant in the heart of the Gayborhood. Small plates like potato croquettes and artichoke frites feel indulgent, and the ambitious cocktail menu is impressive enough to keep even committed carnivores content.

El Bochinche Restaurant & Bar, 4940 N. 5th Street

Colombian and Latin American food make up the massive menu at this North Philly spot, which is well-known for its crave-worthy Colombian empanadas and authentic breakfasts (refried beans with rice, pork skin, sausage, and eggs). Mexican fare, like tacos and tortas, round out the offerings.

El Chingón, 1524 S. 10th Street

On a quiet corner in Passyunk Square, El Chingon pumps out the city's best cemitas, a Puebla-style sandwich. Chef Juan Carlos Aparicio brings decades of experience from the city's best restaurants to this bring-your-own-bottle (BYOB) spot, which The New York Times named one of the country's best restaurants in 2023.

~continued on p. 28

PHILADELPHIA'S TOP CONTENT CREATOR RECOMMENDS THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

By Wooder Ice

This summer, if you're looking for an eclectic to-do list that involves nostalgic games, dancing on rooftops, and sunsets on the river, then keep reading.

Salsa & Sunsets at Bok Bar's Rooftop Salsa Nights: Looking to dance the summer nights away? What better combination than salsa and sunsets? Every second Thursday throughout the summer, Bokbar will be hosting salsa nights on their rooftop bar. Hosted by Philly's own DJ Big George (@djbig_george) and DJ VSpice (djvspice), guests will enjoy classic hits as well as new school flavor. This is perfect for a date or a night out with friends.

Yowie on South Street: Sometimes, the best escapes are found right in your own backyard. Yowie, located on South Street, offers a cozy retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life. With its inviting ambiance and laid-back vibes, it's the perfect spot for a staycation.



Nostalgia & Good Food: Speaking of South Street, if you're looking for a relaxing night out with nostalgic games and food, check out Queen & Rook (607 S 2nd St.). They just moved to a larger space, which provides plenty of board games to enjoy. Rated the #1 board game cafe, this place offers a full restaurant and bar alongside a game and puzzle store.

Sunset Cruise with Sea Philly: Need more sunsets? Why stop at salsa when you can enjoy a cruise? This BYOB experience has catering options, so all you have to do is relax and take in the sights. The classic all-wood boat makes for a cozy sail and the ideal opportunity to capture the perfect Instagrammable moment with your partner or friends.

Find Wooderice on Instagram at @wodder_ice



Photo by German Vazquez

SMART MOVES: ESSENTIAL HOME BUYING AND SELLING TIPS



*By Anita Kent,
CEO of The ZoeyGrace Corporation*

The journey of buying or selling a home resembles an adventure, brimming with twists, turns, and the prospect of fresh starts. Whether you're a prospective buyer seeking the ideal abode or a homeowner bidding farewell to a cherished property, successful navigation demands meticulous planning, foresight, and expert guidance. Here's a condensed guide to help you along the way.

Insights for Purchasing a Home

Plan with Precision: Start by obtaining pre-approval from a mortgage lender to gauge your financial position. Ensure you have a financial buffer of at least six months' worth of mortgage payments for unforeseen circumstances.

Beyond the Down Payment: Acknowledge additional costs like closing fees and potential home improvements. Conduct thorough property inspections to budget for necessary repairs or enhancements.

Strategies for Commanding Top Value for Your Home

Master the Art of Presentation: Declutter and organize to create a spacious, orderly environment.

Consider renting storage space for excess items. This will help buyers envision themselves in the space.

Curate an Inviting Atmosphere: Prioritize cleanliness and maximize natural light to enhance appeal. Clean every corner meticulously to ensure freshness and warmth.

Showcase Your Home's Potential: Highlight unique features through staging. Whether it's a fireplace, views, or a landscaped yard, accentuate these to captivate buyers and leave a lasting impression.

ZoeyGrace Realty believes in transcending transactions to create dreams and memories. The team is dedicated to fostering genuine relationships built on trust, integrity, and personalized service. Whether buying or selling a home, they are committed to guiding their clients through a seamless and rewarding experience.

The journey of home buying and selling is a significant chapter filled with excitement and the promise of new beginnings. By embracing these tips and strategies, you can navigate this transformative process confidently.

Find Anita at www.zoeygracerealty.com

BEAUTY ENTREPRENEUR GROWS WITH SOCIAL



*Loriel Colon,
owner of Lorehel Lash*

In the realm of entrepreneurship, the journey from a fledgling startup to an established storefront is often riddled with challenges. For those who dare to dream big, like myself, the motto “faith over fear” becomes more than just words—it’s a guiding principle. After six years of navigating the ever-shifting tides of commerce, I recently took a monumental step: opening my own storefront. But with it came the weight of expectation and the pressing need to turn a profit.

Believe me, I’ve tried every trick in the book to drum up business. From Google ads to Facebook and Instagram campaigns, I left no stone unturned. Yet, success remained elusive. They say nothing good comes easy, and I wholeheartedly agree.

Then, as if by divine intervention, the breakthrough I needed arrived—a simple yet profound realization. I had built my clientele not through flashy advertisements but by authentically being myself. So, why not leverage social media to showcase the essence of who I am and what my business represents? It was a novel idea, one that seemed ripe with potential.

With renewed determination, I enlisted the expertise of a social media manager. The transformation

was staggering. Our business page skyrocketed from a modest 6,387 followers to an impressive 26.5k, with a reach spanning over 2 million accounts in just 30 days. The impact was undeniable, and the lessons I gleaned from collaborating with my social media manager were invaluable.

As I reflect on this journey, I feel compelled to share my insights with fellow entrepreneurs grappling with the daunting task of generating leads. Social media isn’t just a tool—it’s a lifeline for businesses seeking to thrive in the digital age.

First and foremost, devise a game plan. What are you selling, and who is your target audience? Consistency is key. Establish a regular posting schedule and stick to it religiously. Pay attention to insights and analytics to gauge what resonates with your audience. In the realm of Instagram, a treasure trove of data awaits in the dashboard.

And remember, Rome wasn’t built in a day. Building a loyal following takes time and patience. Don’t be disheartened if the results aren’t immediate. Focus on quality content that speaks to your audience’s interests and needs. Authenticity breeds trust, and trust breeds loyalty.

Find Lorehel Lash on Instagram @LorehelLash and online at www.LorehelLash.com.

CAMINO AL EXITO GRAD PIVOTS



By Emma Restrepo,
CEO & Editor-in-Chief, 2PuntosPlatform

The Latino community's configuration and presence in Philadelphia have changed substantially in the last thirty years, as has the media ecosystem. More than two decades ago, local family newspapers and some network stations reported with little echo from the traditional North American media.

Today, there is an enhanced presence and varied offering of local and hyperlocal media that is as diverse as the community it serves. The stories of how hyperlocal media emerged are as interesting as the people who run them. Philatinos Radio, Venezolanas, Presente Media, Pa'la Radio, *Motivos*, Madre Tierra, *Kensington Voice*, and 2PuntosPlatform, among others, inform and promote our stories and help us feel like a community.

2PuntosPlatform began as a radio broadcast on El Zol aimed at Latina women: *ParaTiMujer*. At that time, I was part of one of the city's iconic radio programs, *El Ritmo de la Comunidad*, directed by Fernando Mendez, with the participation of two spicy voices: Pedro Rodríguez and Víctor Negrón.

With the closure of the El Zol radio station, I produced the program for more than a year in the GPHCC offices under another name: *2PuntosPodcast*. With the arrival of the pandemic, it was done from home and changed format, and 2PuntosPlatform was born.

The platform, based out of Philadelphia and Bogotá, Colombia, shares stories and information relevant

to Latine immigrants—especially women's experiences—in Philadelphia and across the Americas. It has become, in addition to an informative option, an option for young journalists from the city interested in the Latine diaspora.

The platform comprises a podcast, *2PuntosPodcast*, hosted by Julian Carreño and I, which is growing into a new local news source. The other half is VozColectiva, a community newsroom composed of four Latina women in the Greater Philadelphia area: Zulma Guzmán, Mercy Mosquera, Tannia Solís, and Evelyn Toriz, who are reporters. Yet, they are also a food advocate, restaurant owner, cosmetologist, and physical therapist. Together, they analyze, discuss, and produce journalism on an issue that affects Latinas: domestic violence.

As a platform, we participate in various collaborative initiatives. Most recently, we announced a cross-border lunch on the southern border this June with the support of the chef of Casa México, Cristina Martínez, photographer and activist Ada Trillo, and Conexión Migrante in Mexico. This event will promote the reopening of Friendship Park for a more humane journalism angle on the migration issue.

With your help, we have grown so much. We believe in what we do and want to help alongside our community.

Find Emma at www.2puntosplatform.com;
[@2puntosplatform](https://twitter.com/2puntosplatform); and [@vozcolectivaphiladelphia](https://twitter.com/vozcolectivaphiladelphia).

STRIKING THE BALANCE: FINDING WORK-LIFE HARMONY AS A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

GPHCC Staff Writer

For small business owners, the line between work and personal life often blurs into a constant juggle of responsibilities and commitments. The passion and drive that fuel entrepreneurial endeavors can sometimes lead to neglecting personal well-being and relationships. Here are some strategies for entrepreneurs to achieve greater harmony between work and life:

Embrace Time Management

Effective time management is key to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Implementing strategies such as prioritizing tasks, setting boundaries, and scheduling dedicated periods for both work and personal activities can help small business owners make the most of their limited time. Tools like time-tracking apps and calendar management software can also be valuable in staying organized and maximizing productivity.

Delegate and Outsource

Many small business owners fall into the trap of trying to do everything themselves. However, learning to delegate tasks and outsource non-core activities can free up valuable time and energy. Hiring employees or working with freelancers and contractors can help distribute the workload and allow small business owners to focus on the aspects of their business that truly require their expertise.

Set Realistic Expectations

It's important for small business owners to set realistic expectations for themselves and their businesses. While ambition and drive are admirable qualities, expecting perfection or overcommitting to projects can lead to burnout and stress. By setting achievable goals and learning to say no when necessary, entrepreneurs can avoid spreading themselves too thin.

Establish Boundaries

Setting boundaries between work and personal life is crucial for maintaining balance. Small busi-

ness owners should establish clear boundaries around work hours, communication channels, and availability to prevent work from encroaching on personal time. Communicating these boundaries to clients, employees, and colleagues helps set expectations and reinforces the importance of work-life balance.

Schedule Regular Breaks and Vacations

Taking regular breaks and vacations is essential for recharging and avoiding burnout. Small business owners should schedule downtime into their calendars and prioritize taking vacations to rest and rejuvenate. Disconnecting from work during breaks and vacations allows entrepreneurs to fully recharge and return to their businesses with renewed energy and focus.

Seek Support and Community

One of the greatest assets of GPHCC is its network of fellow business owners and industry professionals. By actively participating in chamber events and initiatives, entrepreneurs can forge connections with like-minded individuals facing similar challenges. These connections provide a built-in support system where small business owners can seek advice, share experiences, and find camaraderie in their journey.

Be Flexible and Adaptive

Life is unpredictable, and there will inevitably be times when work demands more attention or personal matters require priority. Embracing flexibility and learning to adapt to changing circumstances helps entrepreneurs navigate the ups and downs of business ownership while maintaining a sense of equilibrium.

Ultimately, a balanced approach to entrepreneurship not only leads to greater fulfillment and happiness but also sets the stage for sustainable long-term success.

ALL HEART WITHOUT THE STRESS



By Ramona Fasula, CHHC, MBA, Author, Certified Holistic Health Coach, Certified Gut Health Specialist and Certified Stress Management Coach at Corrielus Cardiology

Are you feeling overwhelmed by job responsibilities that exceed your role or burdened by too many tasks within your current position? Perhaps there has been a surge in your regular workload or circumstances at work that are beyond your control. Each of these situations can contribute to work-related stress, leading to potential errors, decreased work performance, mental health issues, burnout, and workplace conflicts.

Not only is stress a leading factor for heart disease, but it can also contribute to poor health behaviors, which can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke, such as smoking, overeating, not getting enough physical activity, being overweight, and not taking medications as prescribed. Having positive psychological health can reduce the risk of heart disease or stroke. Some positive mental health characteristics include optimism, gratitude, happiness, a sense of purpose and life satisfaction, and mindfulness. The following statistics, however, paint a different picture when it comes to mental health in the workplace.

According to the Centers for Disease Control:

29% of workers report being at least somewhat stressed at work.

40% of workers find their job to be “very or extremely stressful.”

25% of workers experience frequent burnout or stress from their jobs.

25% of employees report that their job is their number one source of stress.

75% of employees believe that modern workers have more job stress than in the past.

For many workers, stress is a routine aspect of their workday. While stress is likely to persist, there are numerous strategies that employees can use to manage it effectively. Here are some tips to help you navigate your workday.

Maintain a Stress Journal:

Document your stress triggers and their impact on you. Reflect on how you might perceive stressful situations differently. Altering your perspective can significantly affect your stress levels. Consider approaching situations from alternative angles to gauge your stress response.

Prioritize “Me” Time:

Amidst a stressful workday, take breaks to recharge. Whether it's a brief walk, listening to a podcast, or practicing meditation for 10-15 minutes, prioritizing self-care can alleviate work-related stress.

Combat Negative Thinking:

Negative thinking compounds stress, so consciously eliminate pessimistic thoughts and limit interactions with negative individuals. Avoid jumping to conclusions or making automatic judgments, as they only escalate stress levels.

Embrace Mindfulness:

Practice mindfulness to stay grounded in the present moment. Pay attention to your surroundings, including sights, sounds, and sensations. Create a tranquil work environment by incorporating natural elements like plants or small water features. Play soothing music or soundscapes throughout the day. Dedicate 10 minutes daily to a mindfulness app to reduce stress levels and enhance focus.

Neglecting work-related stress can lead to burnout, adversely affecting both mental and physical health. Equip yourself with effective tools to combat work-related stress, and you'll experience a more pleasant work environment. Not only will you notice the difference, but your coworkers will, too.

Find Ramona at www.corrieluscadiology.com.

DIVERSE CHAMBERS UNITE: ACHIEVING HISTORIC PUBLIC POLICY WINS



By Jennifer Rodríguez, President & CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Philadelphia, a city renowned for its rich history and vibrant culture, is also home to a dynamic network of diverse chambers of commerce. In recent years, these chambers have joined forces to create the Diverse Chambers Coalition of Philadelphia, igniting a wave of collaboration that has led to significant public policy victories. Among these triumphs stands two consecutive years of reduction of wage and Business Income and Receipts Taxes (BIRT), a testament to the power of unity and strategic advocacy.

For decades, Philadelphia's African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and LGBTQ chambers have tirelessly advocated for economic equity and opportunity. However, their impact was often hampered by the city's burdensome tax structure, which has placed a disproportionate strain on small businesses, including those owned by people of color. Recognizing the need for change, these chambers embarked on a collaborative journey to tackle this pressing issue head-on.

Through coordinated efforts and unwavering determination, the Diverse Chambers Coalition of Philadelphia leveraged its collective influence to push for meaningful tax reforms, especially the BIRT reduction. They joined a larger coalition, the Inclusive Growth Coalition, and engaged in dialogue with policymakers, presented data-driven arguments, and mobilized grassroots support to garner attention to their cause. Their message was clear: reducing the wage and, critically, the BIRT tax, would stimulate economic growth, foster entrepreneurship, and create a more favorable environment for businesses to thrive.

The fruits of their labor became evident as public officials began to heed their calls for action. In a historic move, the Philadelphia City Council, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, agreed to lower both the wage and BIRT taxes, marking a significant win for the city's business community, particularly minority-owned enterprises, over two consecutive years.

The impact of this tax reduction extends far beyond financial relief. It signifies a fundamental shift in how Philadelphia's diverse chambers wield their collective influence to shape public policy. By uniting their voices and resources, they have demonstrated the power of collaboration in effecting meaningful change.

Furthermore, the reduction of wage and BIRT taxes is poised to fuel economic growth and stimulate entrepreneurship in Philadelphia's majority-minority communities. It will enable businesses to reinvest in their operations, create jobs, and contribute to the city's overall prosperity.

The members of the Diverse Chambers Coalition are keenly aware that their work is far from over. They remain committed to advocating for policies that promote equity, opportunity, and prosperity for all. Through ongoing collaboration and steadfast advocacy, they will continue to be driving forces for positive change in the city they proudly call home.

To learn more about the Diverse Chambers Coalition of Philadelphia, visit www.diversechambersphi.org

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

B2B Latino Mixer

The first B2B Latino in-person event happened at Yards Brewery in early March. Active participants of the monthly virtual gatherings came together to meet and greet potential new members of a second cohort group.



Venezuela-born artist Henry Bermudez's exhibit at the Woodmere Museum was the location for the second B2B Latino mixer in May. The artist was in attendance to meet business owners, GPHCC staff and board members. It was an unforgettable experience that brought together Latino entrepreneurs in a unique networking while enjoying an impressive art exhibition.



Accelerate Mixer

For the second year in a row, the Accelerate Business program graduates were hosted by one of their own, Sea Philly, at the Estuary for a mixer in May with fellow cohort members, instructors, and supporters. Joshua's Catering, another Accelerate alum, catered the event which provided an opportunity for all seven cohorts to network and get to know each other.

GPHCC Annual Meeting

GPHCC's 2024 Annual Meeting happened on Wednesday, March 27th, at Esperanza's Gran Salon. The agenda included a big welcome to the first female Board Chair of GPHCC, Lydia Holiat, a dedicated financial advocate with over a decade of experience at The Haverford Trust Company. To a crowd of over 150 people, City of Philadelphia's Commerce Director Alba Martinez outlined her action items for the City's economic growth and development which included simplifying processes, improving business support, and creating a comprehensive workforce system that is efficient, data-driven and focused on delivering outcomes. She emphasized the importance for small businesses to get minority certification and the expansion of the Taking Care of Business cleaning initiative in the 5th and Lehigh corridor to bring more Latino businesses, arts, culture and vibrancy to the area.



Build Latino Graduation

The Build Latino program celebrated the graduation of its third cohort in April. Graduates completed twelve Spanish-language sessions which included how to read plans and an OSHA 10 Certification with the intent to better prepare businesses to compete for contracts.

Elevate Together

Six businesses were awarded Elevate Together grants earlier this year. Among them were Sea Philly and Sale Strategy. Business owners were asked to submit a video stating their intended use of the \$5,000 award. The latest application period ended at the beginning of July and winners will be announced in the fall.



Camino al Exito

In partnership with Widener University Small Business Development Center, GPHCC celebrated the graduation of start-up business owners that participated in Camino al Exito con Kaufmann FastTrac. The program helps participants determine if their idea is profitable and to create a business plan.



GPHCC SMALL BUSINESS MEMBER UPDATES

El Merkury owner Sofia De Leon has not only added a churro cart to the catering offerings of her Guatemalan street food outpost, but she has launched into distilling with Tenango Rum and become co-chair of the Sisterly Love Collective. (Accelerate Graduate 2019, Excelencia in Hispanic Business Accelerate Awardee 2023)

Motivos magazine published GPHCC's inaugural Exito journal, expanded in-school writing programs to Delaware, and co-created a semester-long podcast residency for Olney High School in Philadelphia. (Accelerate Graduate 2021)

Perez Therapy, which offers individual therapy, couples counseling and family therapy out of their Fishtown office, now accepts Medicaid, making it easier for more patients to receive care. (Accelerate Graduate 2023)

Queen & Rook Game Cafe has moved to 123 South Street! The new location is larger and can better accommodate programs and private events. (Accelerate Graduate 2021)

Q'Hubo News, owned by Amaury Abreu, is now Kommunity. The name change will help clients better identify the firm as a marketing agency, which offers an array of services to foster growth. (Accelerate Graduate 2023)

Sea Philly, owned by Georgette Luna, was named one of the Philadelphia Inquirer's 2024 Philly Favorites. (Accelerate Graduate 2022, Excelencia in Hispanic Business Breakthrough Awardee 2023)

South Philly Barbacoa—Started as a food cart, now housed on 9th Street inside Cristina Martinez' Casa Mexico, celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2024. (Excelencia in Hispanic Business Breakthrough Awardee 2022)

~continued from p. 18

El Merkury, 2104 Chestnut Street

Pop-up shop turned brick-and-mortar, El Merkury specializes in Central American street food. Corn, chocolate, chili, and beans go into popular dishes such as maize-based flatbread pupusas, available con carne, vegetarian, or vegan. For dessert? Elaborate churros served with multiple flavors of ice cream and cake.

Izlas Latin Cuisine, 2725 N. American Street

Salmon Chino-Latino (salmon with stir-fried vegetables and rice); churrasco with chipotle mashed potatoes, spinach, chimichurri and lobster tail; and paella top the list of signature dishes at this Kensington spot with a diner-like atmosphere.

Jezebel's, 206-208 S. 45th Street

Jezebel Careaga is known for her Argentine empanadas, but she also has a way with tortilla de patatas (potato quiches), ham and cheese croissants, and desserts, all served at her charming West Philly spot.

Juana Tamale, 1941 E. Passyunk Avenue

Top Chef alum Jennifer Zavala began slinging homemade tamales at pop-up events before opening her brick-and-mortar spot, Juana Tamale, on East Passyunk. On offer: meat and vegan tamales, birria ramen, tacos, and breakfast options.

La Roma, 2620 E. Allegheny Avenue

This Port Richmond eatery is named after Colonial Roma, the Mexico City neighborhood with a thriving arts and culture scene. The menu highlights dishes special to Port Richmond—pierogies!—as well as Korean short ribs, lobster risotto, and New York strip.

Tamalex Restaurant, 1163 S. 7th Street

For stellar Honduran-style tamales (fatter and heartier than their Mexican counterparts), Tamalex is worth the trip. Sweetening the deal: the enchiladas and huaraches, which also rate highly.

Find the delicious details on other Latino-owned restaurants in Philadelphia at visitphilly.com.

Power up your small business.

Verizon Small Business Digital Ready provides personalized content, coaching, community and more to help move your business forward.



Running a small business has never been more complex. Verizon Small Business Digital Ready can help. It's a free program designed to give small businesses like yours more tools to succeed in today's digital world.

Verizon Small Business Digital Ready was developed in partnership with small business owners like you, who understand what it takes to succeed in the digital economy. The program is simple to use, with all the information available online in one place. After getting to know your business, we'll provide resources, networking and coaching tailored to your specific needs.

The program can help your business move forward in four ways:

Personalized learning

Start with the topics that are most important to your business right now. Content is presented by small business owners like you, and the brief, information-packed lessons will give you strategies you can use right away. As you complete the learning modules, you'll unlock new benefits, like coaching sessions on related topics.

Expert coaching

Get guidance from business experts across legal, marketing, business planning and more. They will help you to apply what you know and what you're learning to execute your plan of action.

Peer networking

Connect with other small businesses and build your network! Share industry information or connect on future business opportunities—it's up to you.

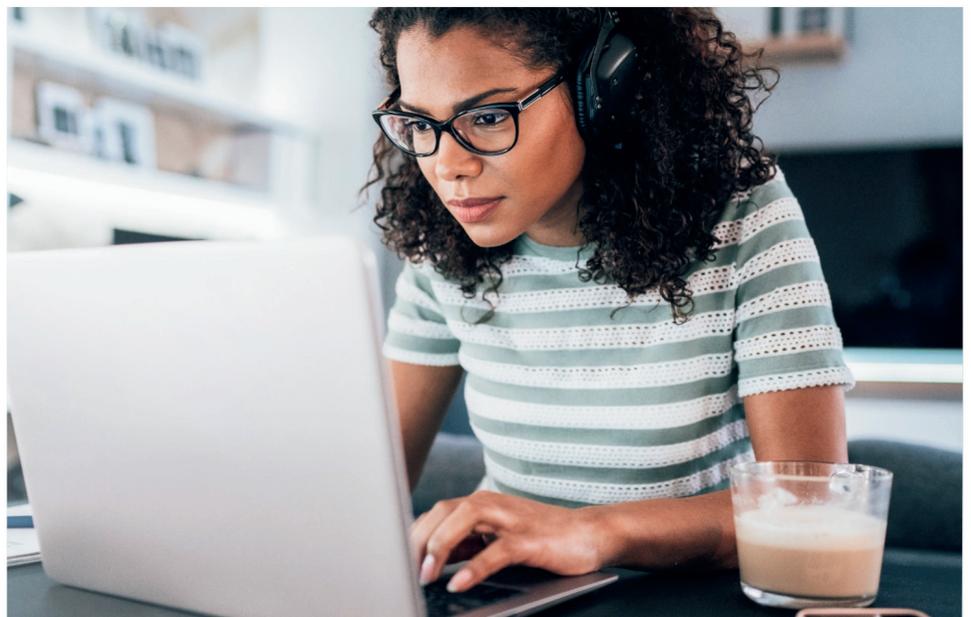
Incentives

By participating in the program, you'll benefit from a marketplace of tools, solutions, products and services that can help move your business forward. You'll also be eligible to apply for grant funding exclusive to users of Verizon Small Business Digital Ready.*

Our communities need diverse and thriving businesses. That's why Verizon is committed to providing support for 1 million small businesses over the next decade—including yours.

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