



*Vladimir Saldana*

Throughout HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH, CTI will profile local Hispanic leaders to celebrate #LowellHispanicExcellence by learning about their experiences, perspectives, and the wisdom they share in our local communities.

**Hispanic Heritage Month 9/15-10/15**

An Interview with **VLADIMIR SALDANA**

Nominated by **Maria Cunha**, Retired from Middlesex Community College (23 years) and also worked for Congressman Marty Meehan and the International Institute of Lowell (now Boston)

**What does Hispanic Heritage Month mean to you?**

The month's celebration brings mixed sentiments for me. Like, I'm thrilled to see North America recognize the contributions people of Hispanic/Latino background have made to building his nation. Moreover, learning stories and, of contributions that are not told in mainstream history education. On the other hand, it reminds me of the painful truths about our country's history. This month is celebrated in spirit but not in any significant way. I think most people don't recognize how the Latino/Hispanic culture and history is part of the fabric of this country's identity. Nevertheless, I see an opportunity for our community to share

our culture, diverse history, and show unity in America under one umbrella. We have more in common than in our differences.

**During your personal and professional life you participated in many activities to benefit the Hispanic community. Can you mention one or two that point to your activism?**

I feel my activism comes from a very personal place. I'm passionate about speaking up for underserved communities whose voices, concerns and needs get easily dismissed. But it's not because I feel better than, but because I'm part of. Two of the projects that filled my heart were having a role in systemic change to affordable housing (Lawrence) and electoral system (Lowell). The voting rights lawsuit that brought the change we are now seeing in Lowell, i.e., having district and at-large candidates is still evolving, but I do remain hopeful we will see more diverse voices at the table of decision making. Diversity in demographic, thought leaders, age, gender, etc. Secondly, the projects I was able to work on with the Lawrence Community Works Real Estate team, like delivering quality housing at working class price was transformational. I think the impact of each affordable housing created by Lawrence Community Works will forever leave a mark in Lawrence's history.

#HispanaExcellenceLowell #CommunityLeader #Leadership #DEIatCTI  
#HispanicHeritageMonth2023 #Appreciation #Gratitude #diversity #equity  
#inclusion #CTIResponde