

OPEN DOOR



Connecting Businesses. Empowering Communities. Creating Opportunities.

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Welcome to Open Door DMV

OUR FIRST ISSUE

Welcome to the very **first edition of Open Door DMV Magazine.**

This publication was created with a simple yet powerful mission: **to connect, empower, and celebrate the people, businesses, and organizations that make our community thrive.**

Throughout the Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) region, thousands of entrepreneurs, professionals, artists, nonprofits, and families are working every day to build stronger businesses, create opportunities, and inspire future generations. Their stories deserve to be told. Their achievements deserve to be recognized. Their impact deserves to be celebrated.

Open Door DMV is more than a magazine; it is a movement. It is a multilingual community platform that includes a magazine, digital media, social media, business directory, and community events, all designed to increase visibility for local businesses while fostering meaningful relationships throughout our diverse community.

In today's fast-moving digital world, many small businesses struggle to stand out and connect with the people they serve. We created Open Door DMV to bridge that gap by providing a trusted platform where entrepreneurs can share their stories, promote their services, celebrate their successes, and connect with new customers and partners.

We firmly believe that when we support local businesses, we strengthen families. When families thrive, neighborhoods grow stronger. And when communities work together, we all succeed.

This vision would not have become a reality without the incredible dedication and passion of an outstanding team. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Emilie Miranda, Melissa Zamora, Rebeca Ventura, Rodrigo Seer, and Gerson Rodriguez, whose creativity, talent, and commitment helped transform this idea into the publication you hold today. Their contributions have been instrumental in bringing Open Door DMV to life.

As we begin this exciting journey, we invite you to become an active part of our growing community. Whether you are a business owner, entrepreneur, nonprofit leader, artist, community advocate, or

simply someone who believes in supporting local businesses, there is a place for you here.

Share your story. Promote your business. Celebrate your achievements. Connect with your community.

Follow us on social media, visit our website, subscribe to our magazine, attend our events, and help us spread the word. Together, we can create new opportunities, strengthen our local economy, and build a community where everyone has the chance to grow and succeed.

Our philosophy is simple:

Together, we are stronger. Together, we create opportunities. Together, we open doors.

Thank you for believing in this vision and for being part of the Open Door DMV family. We are honored to have you with us, and we look forward to growing this community together for many years to come.

With gratitude,

Eric Tomalá

Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Open Door DMV Magazine



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FROM ECUADOR TO OPENING DOORS

THE JOURNEY OF ERIC TOMALÁ

By Eric Tomalá

Most six-year-olds dream about getting new toys for Christmas or their birthday. Eric Tomalá dreamed about turning them into a business.

Long before Eric Tomalá became an educator, entrepreneur, community leader, and founder of Open Door DMV, he was simply a young boy growing up in Ecuador with an endless curiosity and an instinct for business.

Some people discover entrepreneurship later in life. For Eric, it was almost second nature.

“Some people discover entrepreneurship later in life. For Eric, it was almost second nature. **”**

Growing up in Ecuador, Eric attended a Catholic school where he noticed that many of his classmates received money from their parents to pay for school tuition. As an only child for many years, Eric's birthday and Christmas fell just days apart, so instead of receiving cash, he was often showered with toys and gifts.

One day, while looking around the school playground, he saw something his classmates didn't—an opportunity. Instead of keeping his toys to himself, he began renting them to other children during recess and even on the bus ride to and from school. One day, he returned home with a lot of money in his pockets. “Mom almost had a hard attack I recalled.”

His mother was both surprised and concerned. One afternoon, after noticing the unexpected amount of money he had brought home, she asked, “Eric, where did you get all this money?”

With complete innocence, he explained that he had been renting his toys to his classmates. What many adults might have dismissed as a child's game was, in reality, the first glimpse of an entrepreneurial mindset that would shape the rest of his life. At just six years old, Eric had unknowingly discovered one of the most



Photo of Eric's birthday party. (Courtesy of Eric Tomalá).

fundamental principles of business: creating value from resources he already had.

Without realizing it, that small playground business would become the first chapter of a lifelong entrepreneurial journey.

“I didn't know the word entrepreneur,” Eric says with a smile. “I just knew that if people needed something and I had it, we could both benefit.”

That small childhood experiment became the first of many businesses.

Growing up in Ecuador during the 1980s and 1990s meant living through periods of political instability and economic uncertainty. Inflation, changing governments, and financial crises created an environment where many families had to become resourceful just to make ends meet. Rather than seeing uncertainty as a limitation, Eric learned to see it as an invitation to innovate.

By the time he was a teenager, he was constantly launching new ventures. Some lasted for years, while others were simply experiments. Every project taught him something new about customers, risk, leadership, and resilience.

He sold clothing door-to-door, marketed household products and insecticides, and later entered real estate sales shortly after finishing high school. At an age when many of his friends were still deciding what they wanted to do, Eric was already negotiating

property transactions, learning how to build trust with clients, and understanding that relationships were the true currency of business.

But real estate was only one chapter.

His entrepreneurial curiosity refused to stay in one industry.



"We did it!" (Courtesy of Eric Tomalá).

At one point, he rented a small restaurant where he prepared and sold homemade breakfasts and lunches. Long before the concept of pop-up restaurants became popular, Eric was learning firsthand how to manage inventory, suppliers, employees, customer service, pricing, and daily operations when he was invited to work at a relative's project. Every morning began before sunrise, and every satisfied customer became another lesson in hospitality.

When another opportunity presented itself, he pivoted again.

He launched a food wagon selling hamburgers and hot dogs, discovering how location, speed, and customer experience could make the difference between an average day and a successful one. Later, he experimented with opening a neighborhood butcher shop (carnicería), immersing himself in yet another completely different industry. "I had no idea how to slide meet or even the names of the cuts but I was curious and excited to start something new - a new challenge"

Looking back, Eric laughs at how many businesses he started.

"People sometimes ask me why I changed businesses so often," he says. "The truth is, I wasn't chasing businesses—I was chasing knowledge."

“The truth is, I wasn't chasing businesses—I was chasing knowledge.”

- Eric Tomalá

Each venture became an education that no classroom could provide.

Some businesses were profitable. Others barely experience the challenges of a complex emerging economy such as the Ecuadorian. even. A few failed altogether. Yet none of them were wasted. Every setback taught him resiliencia. Every customer taught him communication. Every mistake improved his judgment. Those years became a living laboratory where he developed the confidence to adapt quickly, solve problems creatively, and never fear starting over.

Beyond entrepreneurship, Eric also found himself involved in organizing major national events during one of Ecuador's most turbulent political periods. In a single year, Ecuador experienced the unprecedented transition of five different presidents amid political and economic unrest.

Without realizing it at the time, every business he launched, every risk he took, and every challenge he faced was preparing him for a much larger journey.

The Departure - a new frontier - searching for a dream.



Photo at "Events and Rentals" event. (Courtesy of Eric Tomalá).

When he eventually left Ecuador and immigrated to the United States, he did not arrive with wealth or connections. What he brought with him was far more valuable: the resilience built through countless entrepreneurial experiments, the confidence to begin again, and the belief that every setback carries the seed of a new opportunity.

Those lessons, learned on the streets of Ecuador long before any professional title followed his name, would become the foundation for everything he would later build—from a career in higher education to community leadership, real estate, entrepreneurship, and ultimately, Open Door DMV.

Looking back today, Eric doesn't see those early ventures as separate businesses. He sees them as chapters in the same story—each one preparing him to open doors, not only for himself, but for thousands of others who are still writing their own.



TERAN MEDIA DESIGN

Gabriela Teran Aguilar



 Serving DMV and Virtually Nationwide

Teran Media Design is a strategic branding and web design studio dedicated to empowering women of color entrepreneurs. We help woman-owned businesses create brands and website designs that embody their unique stories, elevate them to stand out in their industry, attract aligned clients and increase their revenue.

By tailoring our services to each brand, each design is unique and unrivaled. Our purpose is not just to empower women, but to celebrate our heritage and stay true to our values. In our work, we blend strategy, creativity and cultural authenticity to help founders build brands that make an impact today and leave a lasting legacy tomorrow.

Services:

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- Brand Strategy & Positioning
- Brand Identity Design
- Brand Messaging & Copywriting

Graphic Design Support

- Packaging Design
- Marketing Collateral
- Social Media Templates

Web Design

- Website Strategy
- Website Design & Development
- SEO
- Website Maintenance
- Blogging support



Gabriela focuses on small-business branding and web design. She helps her clients create strategic brands that convert and set them apart by staying authentic to their core values.

Contact us:  teranmediadesign.com/social/

  @teranmediadesign

Ready to connect? Get in touch today. Step through our open door. 



ZAMS CREATIVES

Melissa Zamora

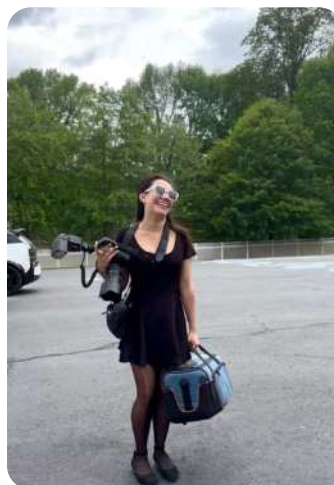
Serving DMV, Florida, and Virtually Nationwide

Zams Creatives is a creative design and digital marketing agency dedicated to helping businesses build strong, memorable brands through thoughtful design, photography, and social media strategy. Founded by Mel Zams, Zams Creatives combines creativity, strategy, and storytelling to create impactful visuals and digital experiences that help businesses connect with their audiences.

With over 10 years of experience in photography, graphic design, branding, and social media management, Zams Creatives works with businesses of all sizes to develop authentic brand identities, engaging content, and marketing solutions tailored to their unique goals. Through professional photography, custom graphics, and social media presence, Zams Creatives helps all kinds of businesses shine!

Beyond design, Zams Creatives believes in the power of authentic human connection. Mel is passionate about building real relationships with entrepreneurs, celebrating their stories, and creating opportunities for businesses to be seen and recognized. Through partnerships like Open Door DMV, Zams Creatives continues to support the growth of Latino businesses and strengthen connections within the DMV community.

Whether your business is launching a new brand, refreshing its online presence, or looking for ongoing creative support, Zams Creatives provides the tools, creativity, and strategy needed to connect and grow with your audience!



Mel loves making people smile and encouraging others to be their most confident selves. She started Zams Creatives to help brands and businesses stand out, connect with their community, and make lasting impressions.

Contact us:



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YOUR HOME, OUR PRIORITY

CASA KEY PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

Silvia Florian

📍 Bethesda, MD

Your Trusted Partner for Rental Property Management in Maryland, Washington, DC & Northern Virginia

Casa-Key Property Solutions, based in Bethesda, Maryland, is a boutique property management firm proudly serving homeowners, investors, and real estate professionals throughout Maryland, Washington, DC, and Northern Virginia with trusted property management solutions.

Specializing in property portfolio management, our team helps property owners protect their investments, improve operations, and achieve peace of mind through personalized service and expert oversight. From individual rental homes to growing portfolios, Casa-Key provides comprehensive support, including leasing, tenant relations, maintenance coordination, property inspections, vendor management, and operational guidance.

With extensive industry experience and bilingual English-Spanish service, Casa-Key understands the needs of today's diverse property owners and delivers transparent communication, proactive solutions, and dependable care.

Whether you are a homeowner, investor, or real estate partner, Casa-Key Property Solutions provides the expertise and personalized attention your property deserves.

Su propiedad en buenas manos. Administración profesional, atención personalizada y soluciones confiables para propietarios en Maryland, Washington, DC y Northern Virginia.



Silvia Florian, Managing Director, and Brian Gomez, Managing Partner at Casa-Key Property Solutions. (Courtesy of Casa-Key Property Solutions)

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LAW OFFICE OF HUGO C. CASTRO, LLC

Attorney Hugo C. Castro



📍 Rockville, MD

Trusted Immigration & Criminal Defense Representation

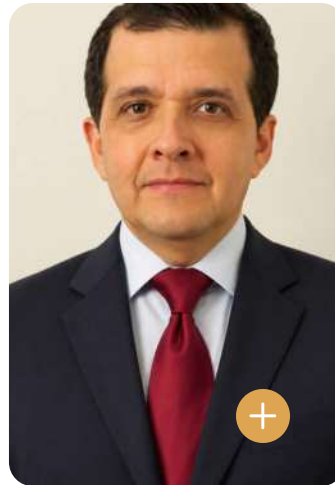
CFor almost two decades, Attorney Hugo C. Castro has been dedicated to helping individuals and families navigate complex legal matters with professionalism, integrity, and personalized attention. Based in Rockville, Maryland, his practice serves clients throughout the United States in immigration matters and represents individuals in Maryland and Virginia in criminal defense, DUI/DWI, and traffic-related cases.

Originally from Peru, Hugo C. Castro earned his law degree from the **University of Lima** before obtaining a **Master of Laws (LL.M.)** from **American University Washington College of Law**. His legal education has been recognized as equivalent to a **Juris Doctor (J.D.)** degree in the United States, and he is licensed to practice law in both **Maryland** and **Virginia**.

Known for his honest legal guidance and strong advocacy, Attorney Castro works diligently to identify the best legal strategies for every client while providing realistic expectations and responsive service. Whether assisting with immigration petitions, defending criminal charges, or representing clients in DUI and traffic matters, his commitment is to deliver high-quality, cost-effective legal representation.

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Adobe Stock Image

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Photos of Rockville headquarters, Attorney Hugo C. Castro, LLC., and website hero image. (Courtesy of Law Office of Hugo C. Castro, LLC)

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THE FUTURE IS OURS

Latino Businesses Are Opening Doors Across the DMV

By Eric Tomalá

There is a phrase that has always inspired me: “La unión hace la fuerza.” Together, we are stronger.

Today, across the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, thousands of Latino entrepreneurs are proving exactly that. Every new restaurant, bakery, law office, construction company, beauty salon, consulting firm, food truck and family-owned shop tells a story of resilience, sacrifice and hope.

But behind every success story is something much more powerful than statistics.

There is the immigrant who arrived with little more than a dream. The mother who transformed her family recipes into a thriving restaurant. The young professional who left corporate America to start a business serving their community. The family who worked together for years until they finally opened their own storefront.



Professional headshot of photographer and entrepreneur, Gerson Rodriguez. (Courtesy of Gerson Rodriguez)



Stock image of a Latino bakery owner serving orders to customers in his community. (Adobe Stock)

These stories remind us that entrepreneurship is about more than commerce. It is about familia, opportunity, dignity and leaving a legacy.

“...entrepreneurship is about more than commerce. It is about familia, opportunity, dignity, and leaving a legacy.”

Organizations across the country continue advocating for better access to capital, financial education and economic justice because Latino entrepreneurs still face many barriers. Yet despite these challenges, our community continues to grow with incredible determination.



Taquitos cooked by K-Kouzina owner, Lucrecia Espinal. (Courtesy of Lucrecia Espinal)

As someone who has spent more than two decades working with Latino communities through higher education, business development and now real estate, I have witnessed firsthand the incredible talent that exists within our community.

What many entrepreneurs need isn't more passion. They need visibility, connections, mentorship and a network that believes in them.

“What many entrepreneurs need isn't more passion; they already have plenty of that. They need visibility, connections, mentorship, and a network that believes in them.”

That is why we created Open Door DMV.

Our mission is simple: **celebrate, connect and empower** Latino-owned businesses throughout our region. Through our digital magazine, business directory, events and community partnerships, we hope to create a platform where every entrepreneur, from the newest startup to the established family business, has the opportunity to be seen.



Stock image of Latina entrepreneur in the fashion industry. (Adobe Stock)

Open Door DMV is more than a publication; it is a growing movement dedicated to fostering collaboration, inspiring generations, and building bridges between business, organizations, y la comunidad that they serve. Our goal is to highlight success stories, share valuable resources, and encourage the next generations of entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams with confidence.

The future of the DMV is being written by entrepreneurs who dare to dream, who work tirelessly, who take risks, and who refuse to give up. Every small achievement, every new startup, and every act of resilience helps shape a stronger and more vibrant community for us all.

To every business owner reading this: ¡Sigue adelante! Não desista. Keep moving forward. Your story matters. Your business matters. And together, we are opening doors for the next generation.



Stock image of a Latina small business owner managing a flower and gardening brick and mortar store. (Adobe Stock)

Because when one Latino business succeeds, our entire community grows stronger.

Bienvenidos. Bem-vindos. Bienvenue. Welcome to Open Door DMV.



Stock image of a Latina restaurant owner welcoming the community into her business. (Adobe Stock)



TEAM BELU: THROUGH THE PANDEMIC TO THE OTHER SIDE

By Rebeca Ventura

The pandemic brought a number of changes to our society, and to Belén Barriga's life. After losing her job, Barriga's passion project, TeamBelu, flourished and continues to make strides today.

First starting out in traditional media after immigrating to the U.S. from Ecuador at the age of 20, Barriga noted a shift to streaming services and platforms like YouTube for radio and TV. She made the professional switch and was hired as part of the marketing team for corporations. During this time, Barriga started TeamBelu, a multi-media marketing company, on the side.

"I was doing it just for fun. I opened the agency to cover concerts and events and part-time and photo shoots and modeling," Barriga recalled.

TeamBelu proved to be a worthy investment for Barriga. She lost her corporation job during the pandemic, allowing her to focus and grow her agency. The belief her community had in her helped her further develop her skills.

"My first client back then said, 'we have a budget for marketing and networking, but the pandemic is happening so we're not going to use [it]. What can you offer me?'" Barriga said. "So that's when I created these packages [of] content creation."

Barriga's original plan was to go back to her job after the pandemic ended, but TeamBelu's success made her permanently switch her focus. Since then, the agency has expanded from one person, to two, to five, to ten and an office in El Salvador.



Photo of Belén Barriga in 2025 (Courtesy of Belén Barriga).

Supporting the community is a core tenet of TeamBelu. Barriga cites the Hispanic community in the DMV as being integral to her success in her career, especially when she first moved to the U.S. TeamBelu shows their gratitude through their YouTube segment "Meet the Locals."

"Giving back to the community to me, it's using our voice and our knowledge and... showing how many businesses we have in our area that are growing, growing, opening, starting, battling with whatever is happening to them," Barriga said. "You need one person to support you in order for you to feel like you can keep going."

“ You need one person to support you in order for you to feel like you can keep going. ”

- Belén Barriga, Owner

From starting off as a side project, TeamBelu went from a fledgling agency to interviewing the likes of Danny Ocean and Rauw Alejandro, managing a broad world of social media content creation.

"What my agency has given me back all these years is the opportunity to put me in spaces that I never imagined," Barriga said. "Covering a business and showing their services and their stories on social media is not only about that, it's about knowing who they are, where they are coming from."



Photoshoot by TeamBelu. (Courtesy of Belén Barriga).

K-KOUZINA

K-KOUZINA

Lucrecia Espinal

📍 Serving DMV

Behind K-Kouzina is the inspiring story of Lucrecia Espinal, an entrepreneur whose passion for food was shaped by the rich culinary traditions of Mexico and El Salvador. After 25 years of bringing together the flavors, culture, and hospitality of both countries, Lucrecia turned her lifelong dream into reality. In 2021, she founded K-Kouzina with a simple mission: to provide exceptional catering services built on quality, dedication, continuous learning, and a genuine commitment to delighting every client.

Today, K-Kouzina offers an extensive menu featuring dishes from a variety of international cuisines, carefully prepared with fresh ingredients and attention to detail. From beautifully crafted fruit displays and gourmet sandwich platters to authentic Mexican favorites and elegant buffet presentations, every event is designed to create a memorable dining experience.

K-Kouzina has proudly catered numerous events at the University of Maryland, earning a reputation for professionalism, reliability, and outstanding service. As the business continues to grow, Lucrecia has welcomed her children into the company, making K-Kouzina a family-owned business built on shared values, hard work, and a passion for hospitality.

More than a catering service, K-Kouzina is a story of perseverance, family, and cultural pride. Every meal reflects the love, dedication, and excellence that have become the foundation of the business, creating unforgettable experiences for every celebration.



Lucrecia and her team cook a variety of dishes that are exceptionally delicious and aesthetically appetizing. See K-Kouzina's dishes above, courtesy of K-Kouzina and Lucrecia Espinal.

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Ready to connect? Get in touch today. Step through our open door.



BAKING A DREAM

It's Never Too Late to Follow Your Passion

By Chef Karla

At 42-years-old in the middle of a global pandemic, I made one of the most important decisions of my life: I went back to school to become a pastry chef.

For years, baking had been my greatest passion. Since I was a little girl, I found joy in mixing ingredients, decorating desserts and watching people smile after tasting something I had created. Yet, like many adults, I convinced myself that my dream would have to wait.

There was always a reason not to pursue it. I had to work, care for my children, support my husband, manage a household and worry about the financial cost of returning to school. Responsibilities became excuses, and little by little, I postponed my dream.

Eventually, I began telling myself it was simply too late.

I continued learning on my own by reading books, practicing recipes and teaching myself everything I could. While those experiences were valuable, a part of me still longed to pursue professional culinary training.

One day, I realized something that changed my life: dreams don't have an expiration date.

“One day, I realized something that changed my life: dreams don't have an expiration date.”

That realization gave me the courage to enroll in culinary school. It wasn't easy. Returning to the classroom after many years required determination, sacrifice, and countless hours balancing family, work, and education. There were moments of doubt, exhaustion and uncertainty. But every challenge reminded me why I had started this journey.

Today, I can proudly say I am living the dream I once thought was impossible.

The greatest reward hasn't only been becoming a pastry chef — it has been discovering that my story has inspired others.



Birthday cake made by Chef Karla. (Courtesy of Chef Karla).

Recently, two people told me they decided to pursue their own culinary degrees after seeing my journey. Hearing those words filled me with gratitude. I already believed I was setting an example for my children, but our actions inspire more people than we imagine.

That is why I want to share my story.

Whether through my work as a pastry chef, my classes or my future blog “Baking a Dream,” my hope is to encourage others to take the first step toward their own goals. No matter your age, your circumstances or how long you've postponed your dream, it is never too late to begin.

Every loaf of bread, every pastry and every dessert reminds me that beautiful things take time, patience and dedication. Dreams are no different.

If my journey taught me anything, it is this: believe in yourself, embrace the challenges and never stop chasing what truly brings you joy.

Because sometimes the sweetest success comes from finally deciding to follow your dream.



Food spread by Chef Karla. (Courtesy of Chef Karla).

KEEPING FOLK TRADITIONS AND MUSIC ALIVE

By Rebeca Ventura

The rich rhythms, dazzling dance steps and magical melodies shape the addicting American musical traditions, from the chilly cap of Canada to the thrilling tundras of Tierra del Fuego. Embracing and presenting this diversity and the magnificent folkloric traditions is the purpose of the National Council of the Traditional Arts (NCTA).



Victor Hernández-Sang at a crowded event. (Courtesy of Víctor Hernández-Sang)

Victor Hernández-Sang, program manager for the NCTA, organizes the hundreds of artists performing on the NCTA's stages across the country and provides support for their folklife festivals.

Growing up in the Dominican Republic, Hernández-Sang's love for music began by discovering the recorder and the flute. His parents put him in music classes throughout his childhood, and he knew he wanted to do something related to music when he grew up.

"As a teenager, I was like, 'Oh, I want to do something related to music.' I knew I wanted to spend my time in the music field. I wasn't sure what," Hernández-Sang recalled.

A Dominican professor teaching at Luther College in Iowa brought Hernández-Sang over, where he studied in undergrad. During one of his classes, he was exposed to ethnomusicology, piquing his interest.

After taking multiple classes with an ethnomusicologist professor, he decided to obtain a PhD in ethnomusicology. Originally, he wanted to go into academia but decided he wanted to do something more public facing.

"It's important to tell the stories of... people from other countries who live in other places of the U.S. but who share certain histories and identities and cultures of people in the DMV," Hernández-Sang said about the importance of the folk festivals.

"It's important to tell the stories of... people from other countries who live in other places of the U.S. but who share certain histories and identities and cultures of people in the DMV."

- Víctor Hernández-Sang

Hernández-Sang has been lucky to witness the positive effects working with the NCTA has had on performers and the audience. Performers and musical groups have been able to get exposure due to the festivals, positively impacting their music careers.

"It has a really good effect for them [the artists] to be able to come and participate in these festivals," Hernández-Sang explains. "And people come out of these festivals always very grateful and letting us know how great the experience was and to have a connection to such a wide audience."

Music has the power to unite communities, embracing often underrepresented traditions. The power of the Americas lies in the rich diverse cultural tapestry, woven by the vibrant colors of its histories, music and arts.



Victor Hernández-Sang happily eating at a restaurant. (Courtesy of Víctor Hernández-Sang)

DMV Local Events & Community Highlights!

Upcoming Events and Community Highlights (Museums, Festivals, etc)



The Museum of the American Latino

¡Azúcar! From now until July 22, 2028, the Museum of the American Latino will be hosting the exhibition, “¡Puro Ritmo! The Musical Journey of Salsa.” More than 300 must-see artifacts detail the rich story of salsa, from its inception to its lasting influence today. No excuse — admission is free. Head over to Washington D.C. to learn more about one of the most influential music genres and its icons!



BloomBars

Looking for a family friendly community event? BloomBars, located in Columbia Heights, Washington D.C. has no shortage of fun on their calendar. On Sundays, participate in “Domingos en español,” with Latin Grammy nominated artists and sing and dance along to classics and children’s songs. Other monthly events include open mics, and salsa and bachata lessons!



Richmond Folk Festival

This year, the Richmond Folk Festival will take place from October 9-11! More than 30 artists from around the country, traditional dances, food and crafts weave a tapestry of the diverse and rich cultures of the Americas. Taking place on Richmond’s riverfront, this celebration of diversity and culture will be fun for the entire family.



Adams Morgan PorchFest 2026

You can’t miss Adams Morgan PorchFest on Saturday October 3! One of the most beloved events of the DMV is coming back for their fall event. A whole day of free performances from local performers, discounted food and drinks from local vendors and enjoying good music with the community. From bluegrass to jazz to Latin to rock, there are more than enough performances for everyone to enjoy — and to discover new music!

Images courtesy of respective businesses and Yelp.

Meet The Team

Summer 2026



Eric Tomalá

Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Eric Tomalá is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Open Door DMV, 365 Events and Rentals, a Maryland Notary Public, wedding officiant, motivational speaker, and entrepreneur. He holds bachelor's degrees in Economics and International Business, along with a Master of Arts in Sociology, and remains committed to creating opportunities, building partnerships, and strengthening communities throughout the DMV.



Rebeca Ventura

Writer & Editor

Rebeca is a Salvadoran-American who loves reading, her cat, hiking and playing bass and guitar. She is an English major with a double minor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Human Development at the University of Maryland. Her passions include education equity, and uplifting underrepresented communities through education and journalism.



Melissa Zamora

Social Media Manager & Designer

Mel is a proud Colombian creative born in Bogotá who immigrated to Maryland at age four and grew up in Olney. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art and Communication Marketing with a concentration in Graphic Design from the University of Maryland. After four years as a graphic designer at UMD and eight years at a corporate design firm, she founded her design agency, Zams Creatives. Mel is honored to help connect and empower Latino businesses through Open Door DMV!



Rodrigo Seer

Website Developer

Rodrigo is the founder of Seer Labs, a small studio building data-driven products for the outdoors and custom software for businesses that need something better than a template. His focus is systems that actually ship. He cares about clarity over cleverness, real-world impact over pixel-perfect demos, and building software people come back to.



Emilie Miranda

Graphic Designer

Emilie is a Salvadoran-American designer from Washington D.C. She is a UMD alum and current student, having earned bachelor degrees in graphic design and English in 2025 and currently working towards her master's degree in Human Computer Interaction. Emilie is passionate about exploring the different fields of design and how they can contribute to social good and community spaces.

Thank You!

¡Gracias!

Merci!

Obrigado!

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