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**Creator:** Casa de Unidad (Detroit, Mich.)  
**Title:** Casa de Unidad records.  
**Inclusive dates:** 1980-2006  
**Extent:** 7 linear feet; and 1 oversize folder  
**Call number:** 2009121 Bd 2; Bd Outsize

**Language:** Material is in English and Spanish.  
**Acquisition:** The record group was donated June 2009 by CLAVE, the Community of Latino Artists, Visionaries, and Educators (donor no. 10201).  
**Accruals:** Periodic additions to the records are not expected.  
**Access:** The record group is open without restriction.  
**Photographs:** Located throughout the collection.  
**Digital Material:** Compact Discs storing images located in box 7.  
**A-V Material:** Audio cassette tapes located in box 7.  
**Copyright:** Copyright is not held by the Regents of the University of Michigan.  
**Processed By:** Shelley Hayreh, July 2009

## Abstract

The records of the Casa de Unidad Cultural Arts and Media Center cover the organization's efforts to promote, develop, and celebrate Hispanic and Latino arts and traditions in Southwest Detroit. The record group consists primarily of correspondence, board minutes, grant proposals and reports, newsletters, event and program budgets, event flyers, educational workshop reports and audio material.

## History

The Casa de Unidad Cultural Arts and Media Center was founded in December of 1980. In November of 1981, the organization was officially incorporated by the State of Michigan. Throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, the center devoted its resources to identifying, developing and preserving the Hispanic/Latino cultural heritage of Southwest Detroit. Among the programs offered by Casa de Unidad were educational workshops in the visual, literary, and performing arts. The center also sponsored a workshop designed especially for high school students entitled *Tradiciones Vivas*.

Besides cultivating local interest in the arts, the center nurtured many local artists by providing an exhibition space in the Galería, the center's art gallery. Casa de Unidad also compiled the first Michigan Hispanic Arts Directory in 1988-1989. Moreover, the center held an annual two-day performing arts festival called *Unity in the Community*, which brought together local businesses, human service agencies, artists and entertainers for a weekend of cultural unity and celebration.

One of Casa de Unidad's most significant contributions to the preservation of local cultural history came out of their 1987 documentation project, which resulted in the published study *Tradiciones del Pueblo: Traditions of Three Mexican Feast Days in Southwest Detroit* (1990). The study was based on a series of oral histories and interviews from Detroit Latinos about the community's artistic and cultural traditions, such as Posadas, Fiestas Gaudalupanas, and Día de los Muertos.

## Scope and Content Note

The records of Casa de Unidad cover the period between 1980 and 2006. The collection consists primarily of correspondence, board minutes, grant proposals and reports, newsletters, event and program budgets, event flyers, educational workshop reports and audio material. The majority of the material is in English, though a small number of flyers, newsletters, and audio recordings are in Spanish. The collection contains the following series: **Administrative Material**, **Educational/Artistic Activities**, **Unity in the Community Festival**, and **Audio Material**.

**Administrative Material** series documents Casa de Unidad's history, organizational structure, expenses and contributions. The series contains written accounts of the organization's history, its mission statement, and its by-laws and constitution. The series also contains the organization's financial statements and budgets, board minutes, grant proposals and reports, as well as multiple volumes from Casa de Unidad's bilingual newsletter "El Barrio."

**Educational/Artistic Activities** series reflects Casa de Unidad's commitment to promoting, developing and celebrating Hispanic and Latino arts in Southwest Detroit. The series is separated into four subseries: **Tradiciones Vivas**, **Workshops**, **Other Activities**, and **Artist Files**. Subseries **Tradiciones Vivas** contains material related to Casa de Unidad's art and humanities workshop for high school students. The subseries includes the workshop's budget, outgoing correspondence, program evaluations, and photographs. Subseries **Workshops** documents the diverse offering of extracurricular programs offered by Casa de Unidad. The material in the **Workshops** subseries includes project reports from each class meeting as well as workshop syllabi. Subseries **Other Activities** underscores the organization's significant contribution to the cultural development of the Detroit Latino community. Much of the material in the subseries is event announcements and flyers, with the majority related to exhibits from the Galería, the center's art gallery. However, the subseries also contains the Michigan Hispanic Arts Directory of 1988-1989, 1989-1990, and 1990-1993. The 1988-1989 Hispanic Art Directory was the first of its kind compiled in Michigan. Also included in the subseries is *Tradiciones del Pueblo*, a published study based on a series of oral histories and interviews from Detroit Latinos about the community's artistic and cultural traditions. Subseries **Artist Files** contains files kept by Casa de Unidad on a variety of Michigan based artists. Many of the artists on file exhibited their work at the organization's Galería. The material is arranged alphabetically according to the artists' name, and primarily contains the artist's resume, biographical material, and flyers from upcoming exhibitions or events.

**Unity in the Community Festival** series contains material from Casa de Unidad's annual two-day festival celebrating the cultural diversity of Southwest Detroit and showcasing the commercial districts and human service agencies in the community. The series contains correspondence with various local community organizations, event budgets and corporate grants/sponsorship, and publicity material such as newspaper clippings and flyers.

**Audio Material** series contains 31 cassette tapes. Cassette tapes 1 through 10 are a part of Casa de Unidad's efforts to document the cultural legacy of the Detroit Latino community through a series of oral histories and interviews with individuals who settled in Detroit during the 1920s. Other recordings include lectures presented at Casa de Unidad, recordings of cultural events, and board meetings.

**Box No. Description**

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**Administrative Material**

**Box 1**

Background/History, 1980-2001 (3 folders)  
 Pre-History, 1980-1981  
 By-laws and constitution, undated  
 Correspondence, 1981-1987 (2 folders)  
 Correspondence, 1995-2005 (2 folders)  
 Board of Directors, 1994-2004  
 Board Meeting minutes and notes, 1981-1983 (2 folders)  
 Board Minutes Notebooks  
     1994  
     1995  
     1996  
     1997  
     1998  
     1999  
     2000  
     2001  
 Membership Committee, 1981  
 Steering and communications committee, 1982-1983  
 Strategic Plan Material, 1995-2001 (2 folders)

**Box 2**

Michigan Council for the Arts, correspondence and reports, 1982-1995  
 (7 folders)  
 Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, correspondence and reports, 2000-  
 2006 (2 folders)  
 City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, 1993-2001 (3  
 folders)  
 Arts Strata, 1988  
 Michigan Latino Arts Initiative, 1999-2000  
 Presbyterian Sisters of Charity, funding proposals, 1983  
 Campaign for Human Development, funding proposal, 1981-1983  
 Report on Community Development Block Grant, 1986-1988  
 Financial Reports and Budgets, 1983-1987  
 Indirect Cost Proposals, 1986-1987  
 Financial Comparative Statements, 1994-2002 (4 folders)  
 Independent Audit, 1993-1996  
 Hispanos Unidos and Casa de Unidad Lease, 1982-1984  
 El Barrio, background/miscellaneous material  
 El Barrio, 1982-1989 (3 folders)  
 Miscellaneous Newsletters, 1981, 1985, 1997-1998  
 Newsletter Printing Equipment and Technique, 1983

**Educational/Artistic Activities**

**Tradiciones Vivas**

**Box 3**

General, 1995-1996, 2002 (2 folders)  
 Project Overview, 2000  
 Correspondence, 1995-2004  
 Announcements and Flyers, 1995-2002  
 Budget, 1998-2005  
 Grant Agreements and Reports, 1995-2002  
 Summer Dreams Grant, 1993, 2001-2002

**Box No. Description**

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**Educational/Artistic Activities (cont.)**

**Tradiciones Vivas (cont.)**

**Box 3 (cont.)**

Rules and Expectations, 1995-2001  
 Evaluations and Reports, 1995-1996 (3 folders)  
 Evaluation Notebook, 2003  
 Project Notebook, 1995-1999 (5 folders)  
 Curriculum, 2003 (2 folders)  
 Photographs, undated (2 folders)

**Workshops**

Announcements, 1986-1990  
 Listings and Dates, 1987-2004  
 Performance Schedules, 2001-2002  
 Monthly Performance Report, 1987-1989  
 Workshop Miscellaneous, undated  
 Creative Writing Workshop, 1989  
 Graphics Workshop, 1985-1989  
 Journalism Workshop, 1982-1983  
 Offset printing and camera workshop, 1986-1989 (4 folders)  
 Photography Workshop, 1981-1989 (2 folders)

**Box 4**

Printing Workshop by the Human Press, undated  
 Writing workshop, 1982-1988

**Other Activities**

Event Announcements, general, 1984-2001 (3 folders)  
 Event Posters, 1988-2002 (in oversize folder)  
 Cinco de Mayo, 1993-2002 (2 folders)  
 Día de los Muertos, 1989-1991 (2 folders)  
 Galería (flyers, news releases), 1986-2002 (3 folders)  
 Michigan Hispanic Arts Directory, 1988-1990, 1993-1994  
 Machito Memorial Concert, 1988 (2 folders and one oversize poster)  
 "Moving Our Barrio Forward," mini convention, 1981  
 Tito Puente Dinner, 1984  
*Tradiciones del Pueblo: Traditions of Three Mexican Feast Days in Southwest Detroit*, 1990 (2 folders)  
 Youth Festival, 1985  
 "La onda Latina en Poesia," poetry anthology, 1985  
 "She Be Me" Exhibit, 1998  
 "Through Their Eyes" Photo Exhibit, 1992  
 "Zorra," a theatrical production, 1983  
 Photographs, undated

**Artist Files**

Alva, Diana  
 Basombrio, Isabela  
 Bustos, Graciela  
 Cardenas, Brenda  
 Cardona, Ana  
 Cox, Kenn  
 Cruz, Benny

**Box No. Description**

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**Educational/Artistic Activities (cont.)**

**Artist Files (cont.)**

**Box 4 (cont.)**

Damiano, Linda  
De la Torre, Lucia  
De la Vega, Ruben  
Delano, Jack  
Diaz, Carlos  
Duran, Ismael  
Esteves, Sandra Maria  
Figueroa, Encarnita

**Box 5**

Gomez, Jose Antonio  
Gonzalez-Gonzalez Alberto  
Harrison, Wendell  
Hernandez, Lolita  
House, Gloria  
Jurado, Alvaro  
Lara, Rene  
Lara, Lupe  
Luevanos, Mary  
Mad Hatters  
Mendoza, Nora Chapa  
Mora, Francisco  
Munoz, Delfin  
Narezo, Jose Luis  
Negrete, Jesus "Chuy"  
Nethercott, Shaun  
Ochoa, David  
Perea, Florencio  
Perez, Hector Tapia  
Perez Prades, Danis  
Quiroz, Martin  
Reagen Rosales, Christine  
Reyes, Arnoldo  
Rivera, Osvaldo  
Rodriguez, Maria Elena  
Rosado S, Theresa  
Rosas, Mel  
Saenz, Gil  
Sanchez, Jacqueline  
Sanchez, Trinidad  
Sarmiento, Alexia  
Sovoda, Gladys  
Sun Messengers  
Tiznado, Dulce Maria  
Vargas, George  
Villalobos, Alma Rosa

**Unity in the Community Festival**

Annual Festival

3<sup>rd</sup>, 1981

4<sup>th</sup>, 1982

**Box No. Description**

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**Unity in the Community Festival (cont.)**

**Box 5 (cont.)**

Annual Festival (cont.)  
 5<sup>th</sup>, 1983  
 6<sup>th</sup>, 1984  
 7<sup>th</sup>, 1985  
 8<sup>th</sup>, 1986 (2 folders)  
 9<sup>th</sup>, 1987  
 10<sup>th</sup>, 1988 (2 folders)

**Box 6**

11<sup>th</sup>, 1989 (3 folders)  
 12<sup>th</sup>, 1990  
 13<sup>th</sup>, 1991  
 14<sup>th</sup>, 1992 (2 folders)  
 15<sup>th</sup>, 1993  
 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994 (2 folders)  
 17<sup>th</sup>, 1995 (3 folders)  
 18<sup>th</sup>, 1996  
 19<sup>th</sup>, 1997  
 20<sup>th</sup>, 1998  
 21<sup>st</sup>, 1999  
 22<sup>nd</sup>  
     General, 2000 (2 folders)  
     Event Binder, 2000 (2 folders)  
 23<sup>rd</sup>  
     General, 2001 (2 folders)  
     Event Binder, 2001 (4 folders)

**Box 7**

24<sup>th</sup>, 2002  
 25<sup>th</sup>  
     General, 2003 (2 folders) (includes 3 compact discs storing  
         images)  
     Event Binder #1, 2003  
     Event Binder #2, 2003 (2 folders)  
     Event Binder #3, 2003 (2 folders)  
 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004

**Audio Material**

Oral History

Father James Barrett, part 1, April 12, 1991 (Cassette Tape 1)  
 Father James Barrett, part 2, April 12, 1991 (Cassette Tape 2)  
 Maria Benitez, interviewed on subject of Fiestas de la Fe, part 1,  
     May 4, 1991 (in Spanish) (Cassette Tape 3)  
 Maria Benitez, interviewed on subject of Dia de los Muertos, part 2,  
     May 4, 1991 (in Spanish)(Cassette Tape 4)  
 Angel Cornejo, May 17, 1991 (Cassette Tape 5)  
 Nick Mares, Jr., part 1, May 29, 1991 (Cassette Tape 6)  
 Nick Mares, Jr., part 2, May 29, 1991 (Cassette Tape 7)  
 Joe Rodriguez, part 1, June 21, 1991 (Cassette Tape 8)  
 Joe Rodriguez, part 2, June 21, 1991 (Cassette Tape 9)  
 Joe Rodriguez, part 3, June 21, 1991 (Cassette Tape 10)

**Box No. Description**

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**Audio Material (cont.)**

**Box 7 (cont.)**

Michigan Latino Arts and Cultural Initiative

Grand Rapids, part 1 and 2, August 12, 1999 (Cassette Tape 11)

Grand Rapids, part 3 and 4, August 12, 1999 (Cassette Tape 12)

Grand Rapids, part 5, August 12, 1999 (Cassette Tape 13)

Saginaw, part 1 and 2, August 14, 1999 (Cassette Tape 14)

Saginaw, part 3, August 14, 1999 (Cassette Tape 15)

Casa de Unidad Board Meeting, January 12, 2000 (Cassette Tape 16)

Religious Fiestas of Southwest Detroit, undated (Cassette Tape 17)

Lectures

Laurie Sommers on collecting Oral Histories, undated (Cassette Tape 18)

Juan Herrera (Cassette Tape 19)

Dave Perry, Photography Documentary, October 15, 1988 (Cassette Tape 20)

Ana Cardona on Gerontology Perspective, Sue Perez on Images, and John Cicala on Folklorist, October 15, 1988 (Cassette Tape 21)

Dolores Gonzalez, October 15, 1988 (Cassette Tape 22)

Lupe Aguirre Tribute

Gracious a la Vida, May, 1991 (in Spanish) (Cassette Tape 23)

Gracious a la Vida, May, 1991 (in Spanish)(Cassette Tape 24)

Unity in the Community Festival, September 13, 1992 (Cassette Tape 25)

Tradiciones del Pueblo slide presentation

Part 1, undated (Cassette Tape 26)

Part 2, undated (Cassette Tape 27) )

Fiestas Guadalupanas

St. Anne's, December 11, 1989 (Cassette Tape 28)

St. Anne's, December 11, 1989 (Cassette Tape 29)

St. Anne's, December 11, 1989 (Cassette Tape 30)

St. Gabriel's, December 10, 1989 (Cassette Tape 31)