



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Breckenridge Creative Arts Celebrates DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS October 23–25, 2015 at Breckenridge Arts District Highlights include Aztec dancing, sugar skull-making and community altar

BRECKENRIDGE, CO (October 14, 2015) –In partnership with Metropolitan State University of Denver’s (MSU) Department of Chicano/Chicana Studies and Colorado Folk Arts Council, Breckenridge Creative Arts will host a three-day celebration of **Día de los Muertos** from **October 23-25** at the **Breckenridge Arts District** in downtown Breckenridge. The weekend festivities will feature a variety of free classes, workshops and family activities with bilingual instructors from MSU.

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is the Mexican cultural tradition honoring deceased family members and friends each year on November 1 and 2 through the creation of calaveras de azúcar (sugar skulls), altares de muertos (altars of the dead) and ofrendas (offerings). A festive and social occasion, Día de los Muertos welcomes the return of those who have died and recognizes the cycles of life and death. Developed from ancient traditions of the Aztecs, the annual ritual evolved over 3,000 years in Mexico and has become a part of modern day culture.

“We are honored to once again host this important celebration for our community,” said Robb Woulfe, President and CEO of Breckenridge Creative Arts. “Día de Los Muertos is a celebration of life, culture and creativity, so we invite everyone to come out and experience the traditions of this colorful holiday, from Aztec dance workshops, to paper flower-making, to building a celebratory altar to honor our loved ones.”

In addition sugar skull decorating, skeletal face painting and other calavera inspired crafts, one of the highlights of the weekend will be the community altar that will be created and displayed at the Randall Barn in the Breckenridge Arts District throughout the weekend. Creating these altars is one of the most important traditions

during Day of the Dead in Mexico—and in Mexican-American and Latino communities worldwide. Additionally, a Day of the Dead art installation by local educator and collector César Muñoz will be on view at Old Masonic Hall through October.

The Breckenridge celebration of Día de los Muertos will be led by Dr. Renee Fajardo and bilingual student teachers from MSU Denver, where they will share the history, traditions, and customs of Day of the Dead through a series of classes and community events. In addition, performers from Grupo Huitzilopochtli Danza Azteca, a traditional Aztec dance troupe from Denver, will lead workshops and perform throughout the weekend. All activities are free, open to the public, and take place in the studios and outdoor spaces of the Breckenridge Arts District campus, located on the corner of Ridge Street and Washington Avenue in downtown Breckenridge.

A full schedule of Día de los Muertos activities in Breckenridge is outlined below. For more details, please visit www.breckcreate.org.

Friday, October 23

Día de los Muertos | Opening Party & Reception

6 to 8 pm, Old Masonic Hall

FREE

The community is invited to the first night of the weekend festivities to celebrate the dead and honor the living at the Día de los Muertos kick-off party. The evening will feature a cash bar, music, traditional face painting, and a reception for educator and collector César Muñoz, whose Day of the Dead installation will be on view at Old Masonic Hall through October.

Saturday, October 24

Aztec Dance Workshop

10:30 am to 12 pm, Old Masonic Hall, upper studio

FREE; advanced registration requested

Learn the history and significance of the danza to Día de los Muertos with Grupo Huitzilopochtli Danza Azteca. The company has been in the Denver area for 40 years and is under the direction of Capitan Raul Chavez, a 5th generation danzante from Mazatlan, Mexico. This hands-on dance workshop will prepare families for the candle light vigil on Saturday night and the altar dedication on Sunday. Participants will be able to join in one of the grupos sacred dances for these two events, if they wish.

Mask-Making for Families

10:30 am to 12 pm, Old Masonic Hall, lower studio

FREE; advanced registration requested

Inspired by sugar skull face painting, you will learn how to decorate your own unique Day of the Dead mask. But unlike face paint, you won't have to wash your mask off at the end of the celebration. Mask making is an ancient form of celebration and reverence in Mexico. All materials provided.

Community Altar

10:30 am to 12 pm, Randall Barn

FREE

Day of the Dead altars honor the lives of those who have passed. Creating these altars is one of the most important traditions during Day of the Dead in Mexico—and in Mexican-American and Latino communities worldwide. The modern Mexican holiday is a rich blending of traditions, its origins traced back to beliefs and activities of indigenous peoples of Central and South Mexico, as well as Catholic celebrations of All Saints Day and All Souls' Day. The community is invited to bring photographs of loved ones and flowers to place on a communal altar that will be on display in the Randall Barn on the Breckenridge Arts District campus. Instructions and history of the altar will be given throughout the day in Spanish and English. Little calavera notes will be adorned with your personalized messages to send greetings to those dearly departed.

Día de los Muertos Face Painting

12 to 5 pm, Quandary Antiques Cabin

FREE; first come, first served

Artist Leah Reddell brings her extreme face painting experience and love for Day of the Dead festivities to Breckenridge for a weekend of creative face paintings of skulls, masks, and flowers. Skulls – known as calaveras or calacas in Mexico – are an essential part of the symbolism of Día de los Muertos. They are used not only as the basis for painting faces, but also are the shape of candy such as sugar skulls and for many skeleton-inspired decorations. Free face painting is open to adults and children. This attraction is first come, first served; artist will accommodate as many guests as possible before 5 pm.

Aztec Dance Workshop

1:30 to 3 pm, Old Masonic Hall, upper studio

FREE; advanced registration requested

Learn the history and significance of the danza to Día de los Muertos with Grupo Huiziloptchli Danza Azteca. The company has been in the Denver area for 40 years and is under the direction of Capitan Raul Chavez, a 5th generation danzante from Mazatlan, Mexico. This hands-on dance workshop will prepare families for the candle light vigil on Saturday night and the altar dedication on Sunday. Participants will be able to join in one of the grupos sacred dances for these two events, if they wish.

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Paper Flowers/Papel Flores-Making for Families

1:30 to 3 pm, Fuqua Livery Stable

FREE; advanced registration requested

Come learn the tradition of creating handcrafted paper flowers. In this workshop you will learn the art of Papel Picado and traditional Mexican paper flowers. Both of these Mexican traditions utilize thin paper commonly cut

from tissue paper using a guide and either small chisels or scissors. This workshop is open to all ages. All materials provided

Candle Light Vigil & Community March

6:30 to 7:30 pm, Ridge Street Arts Square

FREE

This is a time of remembrance, sacred tradition, love and bringing all our community together. Dr. Rene Fajardo of MSU Denver will speak on the ceremonial importance of Dia de los Muertos. There will be a community altar to bring photos of loved ones, followed by a lighting of candles as Grupo Huitzilopochtli Danza Azteca leads participants in a procession through the Breckenridge Arts District campus. Families are welcome to carry the picture of loved one with them during the procession.

Sunday, October 25

Sugar Skull Decorating for Families

11 am to 12 pm, Fuqua Livery Stable

FREE; advanced registration requested

Mexico possesses a rich and complex relationship with death that extends far beyond the Day of the Dead holiday and its iconic sugar skulls. In this workshop you will receive an introduction to the customs of Día de los Muertos and the symbolism of the sugar skull. Participants will be taken through the sugar skull making process step by step, and then create their very own skull art. All materials provided.

Aztec Dance Parade & Altar Dedication

12 to 1 pm, Ridge Street Art Square & Randall Barn

FREE

Día de los Muertos demonstrates a strong sense of love and respect for one's ancestors, celebrates the continuance of life, family relationships, and community solidarity, and allows people to talk about and find humor in death. Grupo Huitzilopochtli Danza Azteca has created a special Aztec show, based on Aztec mythology, to celebrate Día de los Muertos. The dancers perform the Battle Dance which features two Aztec warriors. When one of the warriors perishes, his soul is greeted by another soul who leads him to his next life in the Aztec underworld of Mictlan, where the dead dwell. The sequence ends when the souls who reside in Mictlan perform the Día de los Muertos Dance.

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About Breckenridge Creative Arts

Established in 2014, Breckenridge Creative Arts was developed by the town to support and promote arts, culture, and creative experiences throughout Breckenridge. This multidisciplinary nonprofit organization is responsible for the successful management of a series of programs, properties and partnerships that collectively animate and populate a cultural corridor in the heart of downtown Breckenridge. From quality performing and

visual arts to the development of one of the region's newest arts districts, Breckenridge Creative Arts is a transformative force for Breckenridge and the greater Summit County community. More info at breckcreate.org.

About MSU's Journey Through Our Heritage & Colorado Folk Arts Council

Journey Through Our Heritage is a multicultural educational program of Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) Department of Chicano/Chicana Studies that fosters intercultural leadership among metro Denver high school students by pairing them with MSU Denver student mentors. Colorado Folk Art Council, whose mission is to encourage the preservation of ethnic cultural arts, history and traditions through educational workshops, youth team building, public performances and community projects, is one of Colorado's oldest multicultural organizations.

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