

**Today's youth continue with Chávez's spirit**  
**by Hector Navejas of Vida en el Valle / Sacramento Bee Edition**

When little Cristal Aguayo arrived at Sierra College where the Youth Leadership Conference in honor of César Chávez was taking place, she immediately felt she could take advantage of the situation.

The 9-year-old Aguayo, a fifth-grade student, had a big interest in the educational seminars offered at the conference. "Today, I have been in the Culture Academy, in Anatomy/Biology where I learned about different parts of the human body, and I just left the planetarium where she showed us the planets and the stars," said Aguayo with a fluid and sure voice. "I really enjoy classes in sciences, math and history."

Like Aguayo, hundreds of students from different schools throughout Placer, Sacramento, Yolo Counties and throughout Northern California showed up last Saturday to celebrate a day filled with education, culture, music and history.

"We are offering this conference so that all children who attend sixth-through-12th grade can improve their educational condition and prepare to be able to study in college," said René Aguilera, event organizer and coordinator. "Today we have had more than 1,000 students and have offered more than 40 workshops so that they and their parents can participate and learn different topics and about the value of education."

Aguilera added that every year the conference honors Chávez because he was a fighter for civil rights and battled in the fields and the streets in an effort to improve the working conditions of the workers.

"We want to show our students that they can fight for their rights in education, that they can go to Harvard, Yale, UC Davis or any of the other colleges in the region," he said while giving signals to his assistants that some workshops were about to start.

"Here, we have brought in 200 volunteer teachers who are teaching and who perhaps make \$150,000 a year because they are educated," said Aguilera. He said Latino students can also become professionals and open their own roads in society.

Javier Lozano, a high school senior, said he was interested in the technology and engineering workshops because those are careers that have a bright future and perhaps he'll study computer system engineering. The students had the opportunity to get information about the professions, how to get funds and scholarships for college, book sales and other services.

In addition to the educational activities, the conference offered performances by musical groups like the trio Embajaadores de Roseville, the youth rap group JCT, and the Lux Taxi Band which made children and parents dance. There were also presentations by Aztec and Mexican folkloric dance groups, book exhibitions, art displays and Mexican food.

The conference concluded in the afternoon with the presentation of 'Nightmare on Puberty Street, a play presented by Teatro Educativo of the Kaiser Educational Theater.

That same day in various part of California, the Latino community celebrated the Chávez legacy. In Sacramento, hundreds of people marched in downtown Sacramento to show support for immigrant rights and to commemorate the farmworker leader's battles for farmworkers.

Next year's 8th Annual Cesar Chavez Youth Leadership Conference will be held at Sierra College on March 29, 2008 from 8 am to 4pm.

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