

ROYBAL REMEMBERS DAY OF THE DEAD
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The Roybal Family Mental Health Center (RMHC), located on Caesar Chavez in East Los Angeles, celebrated Day of the Dead to honor lost loved ones on Thursday, November 1, 2012. Under the direction of RMHC Program Head Steve Hendrickson, L.C.S.W., staff created two altars, one for clients in the lobby and one for staff in a conference room. Clients and staff placed photos, flowers, skulls and other traditional decorations on and around the altars in remembrance of the dead. Staff shared a potluck lunch with traditional Mexican and other ethnic foods as part of the event.



Day of the Dead or Dia de los Muertos is a Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico and around the world. The holiday focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. It is particularly celebrated in Mexico, where it is a national holiday, and all banks are closed. The celebration takes place on November 1, in connection with the Catholic holidays of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day (November 2). Traditions connected with the holiday include building private altars honoring the deceased using sugar skulls, marigolds, and the favorite foods and beverages of the departed and visiting graves with these as gifts. They also leave possessions of the deceased.



Scholars trace the origins of the modern Mexican holiday to indigenous observances dating back hundreds of years and to an Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl. The holiday has spread throughout the world: In Brazil, *Dia de Finados* is a public holiday that many Brazilians celebrate by visiting cemeteries and churches. In Spain, there are festivals and parades, and, at the end of the day, people gather at cemeteries and pray for their dead loved ones. Similar observances occur elsewhere in Europe, and similarly themed celebrations appear in many Asian and African cultures.