Year in Review - 2015

In 2015, NHMC helped achieve a more responsible and inclusive media ecosystem and advance more affordable and open communications services for all.

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Message from NHMC’s President & CEO

The Latino community has joined together on occasions of celebration and occasions of protest. Throughout the year, Latinos have celebrated the accomplishments of outstanding individuals in television, film, theater and journalism.

NHMC continues to push with all media avenues to allow Latinos to connect and share their stories, be it through our advocacy, Television Writers Program, Latino Scene Showcase, Latino Premiere Club, or our policy advocacy work to expand affordable access to open communications systems and Latino ownership of media outlets.

However, the Latino community still faces discrimination and exclusion, which has been encouraged by very influential people and corporate executives. NHMC continues to meet with organizations, executives and Latino community influencers to ensure that hate speech is not tolerated, nor allowed to limit the inclusion of Latinos in media or have access to communication systems.

2016 will be a landmark year in the work to demand that media corporations include Latinos at all levels of employment. Latino talent and expertise is there, but television networks, film studios, production companies and talent agencies must make a concerted effort to tap into it and make Latino inclusion an immediate business imperative.

With your support, NHMC will continue to be an organization at the forefront of American Latino media advocacy. It is at the table with key decision makers in Hollywood and Washington, D.C., pushing to ensure that Latinos across the nation are treated fairly and have access to all opportunities in the media.

Alex Nogales
President & CEO
National Hispanic Media Coalition
Responsible and Inclusive Media

Training and Infusing Latinos into the Media Pipeline

NHMC Television Writers Program

In its 13th year the intensive television scriptwriters workshop received more than 300 applications from all over the nation. This year marked a shift in the program where participants were given the option to write a specific script of an existing show or develop their own pilot. In 2015, three alumni sold shows to NBC and ABC; one of which is already in production, and alumni contributed to the following shows on television and streaming services for the 2015-2016 season: NCIS (CBS); Jane the Virgin (CW), The Catch (ABC), Telenovela (NBC), Rosewood (FOX), East Los High (hulu), Devious Maids (Lifetime), Superstore (NBC), NCIS (CBS), Elena of Avalor (Disney Jr), Fuller House (Netflix). Since its 2003 launch, more than 100 writers, 25% of whom have been staffed on shows, have graduated from the program.

Latino Scene Showcase

In October, NHMC and the Los Angeles Theatre Center presented the 3rd Annual Latino Scene Showcase at the El Portal Theater in North Hollywood. The showcase featured seven scenes written by NHMC TV Writers Program alumni and performed by Latino actors before an audience of over 150 television network executives, agents and managers. The goal of the event is to bring attention to Latino actors and writers so they can gain access to the industry and connect with key industry professionals who will help them further their career. Due to the exposure received at these events, various participants have signed with agents and managers and/or are currently in the process of acquiring representation. Sponsors of the 2015 showcase were CBS Entertainment, Disney/ABC Television Group and NBCUniversal.
NHMC MediaCon

In July, over 200 media, entertainment and tech industry executives and insiders, as well as Latinos at both the professional level within the industry and those looking to enter the industry, convened at the 2015 NHMC MediaCon in Los Angeles. The half-day conference explored the impact of Latinos on the entertainment industry. Chairman of NBC Entertainment, Robert Greenblatt sat with NHMC’s president and CEO, Alex Nogales during the keynote panel to discuss how to succeed in Hollywood, the need for more mentorship and the work Greenblatt has done to bring diversity to the small screen. The extraordinary event received high-profile coverage in several industry outlets, including The Wrap and The Los Angeles Times.

Policy Fellowship Program

Each semester, NHMC selects at least one law student to participate in this paid policy fellowship program. Past fellows hail from distinguished schools such as Harvard, Stanford, UCLA, UC-Berkeley and Georgetown. Fellows are guided through legal and policy research, analysis, writing and public speaking. They build skills while assisting NHMC’s advocacy before the FCC and other agencies. NHMC staff dedicates time to connecting its policy fellows with employers. Former NHMC fellows have gone on to judicial clerkships, the FCC, media companies, non-profit organizations, and law firms large and small. This year, NHMC is pleased that former Facebook Policy Fellow, J.J. Mulligan, is an Immigration Justice Corps Fellow at Atlas: FIY in Brooklyn, NY. Summer Google Policy Fellow, Daiquiri Ryan, was invited back to NHMC and continued her fellowship during the fall semester. Other previous policy fellows have gone on to positions at the FCC, the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, and many other prominent positions.
Pushing for Responsible Latino Media Portrayals

Donald Trump’s Hate Speech

On June 16th, businessman and public figure, Donald Trump, stated,

“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best ... They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”

Appalled by this statement, NHMC brought Trump’s hate speech to the attention of NBC’s Entertainment Chair, Bob Greenblatt, and Entertainment President, Jennifer Salke. President and CEO of the NHMC, Alex Nogales, insisted that NBCUniversal sever all business ties with Trump. Shortly after, NHMC applauded NBCUniversal and Univision, Miss USA Pageant Spanish broadcast co-hosts, and Macy’s for cutting ties with Donald Trump.

NHMC also urged PGA of America to suspend its relationship with Trump by relocating their Grand Slam tour. Though PGA followed through with this suggestion, NHMC caught the attention of the Trump Organization and faced a lawsuit threat. NHMC did not stand down in its defense of the American Latino community and continued with its campaign.

The #DumpTrump campaign grew as the Multi-Ethnic Coalition launched a petition urging LPGA, USGA, PGA Tour and PGA of America to drop tournaments from the organization, distancing themselves from Trump.

As NHMC waited for a response from the golf organizations, NBC Universal’s Saturday Night Live (SNL) announced that Donald Trump would be invited as a host for the comedy show. Outraged by this decision, NHMC joined America’s Voice and Moveon.org on a petition asking Lorne Michaels to disinvite Trump as a host. The petition gathered over 570,000 signatures and was delivered to 30 Rockefeller Plaza along with dozens of protestors. The evening of the SNL taping, LULAC, along with other respected Latino organizations and over 100 protestors, marched from the Trump Tower to NBC 30 Rock. The protestors made headlines and highlighted that ratings were not worth the acceptance of hate speech.
Diversifying Talent Agencies

On March 25th, NHMC and other advocacy groups denounced entertainment industry outlet Deadline for its March 24th article on Hollywood diversity by Nellie Andreeva. The article painted a picture of so called “reverse discrimination” in an industry in which people of color – who make up nearly 40% of the population – have been vastly underrepresented and caricatured since its inception to the present day. The piece also called for color-blind casting, claiming that there are not enough talented people of color to fill roles and that requests for diverse talent from studios cause less-qualified people to take roles away from better qualified white actors. The article also inaccurately suggested that networks and studios have diversity quotas. Though Deadline issued an apology on March 29th, the multi-ethnic media coalition, which includes NHMC, called on Hollywood’s talent agencies to meet and discuss how they can work together to increase representation of people of color. The coalition has since met with the following agencies CAA, Paradigm, ICM and WME and will continue to work with them on their diversity efforts.

Advocating for Latino Inclusion in Media

Federal Policy Advocacy for Media Ownership Rules that Increase Diversity

On September 25th and December 3rd, NHMC’s Vice President of Policy, Michael Scurato, testified before Congress, advocating for more equitable broadcast ownership rules. The hearing, entitled “Broadcast Ownership in the 21st Century” was called before the Communications and Technology Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. During the hearing, NHMC urged Congress to reinstate a tax incentive program that increased ownership diversity in 20th century, to push the FCC to strengthen and enforce media ownership rules, and perform critical research and analysis.
The Rising Creators Project

BabyFirst, a TV network devoted to delivering high-quality child development programming to toddlers and their parents, teamed up with NHMC to launch the “Rising Creators Project,” an annual Latino-themed programming competition that invited emerging Latino talent including writers, musicians, animators and producers to submit their ideas or existing children’s TV series for consideration. An esteemed panel of media executives selected the winning project, Team Abuelita by the hardworking writers and producers Zoila Amelia Galeano and Jennifer Dornbush. The winning producers will work with the network’s production team to fine-tune their existing work before it premieres.

Latino Premiere Club

The Latino Premiere Club, a new partnership between NHMC and the LatinHeat Media Institute, overwhelmingly voted to recommend A24’s crime drama film A Most Violent Year following a screening held at ArcLight Cinemas in Pasadena, California on January 30.

The film, written and directed by J.C. Chandor, stars Guatemalan-Cuban-American actor Oscar Isaac and Jessica Chastain. Isaac plays the lead character, Abel Morales, a Latino immigrant businessman in New York City whose efforts to expand his company are threatened by attacks and corruption.

In a Q&A session following the screening, panelist Moctesuma Esparza, a veteran film producer and CEO of Maya Cinemas, heralded A Most Violent Year as a “potential turning point in how Hollywood represents who we [American Latinos] are.”
Honoring Latino Talent and Advocates

NHMC Impact Awards Gala

At the 19th Annual NHMC Impact Awards Gala, NHMC honored the outstanding achievements and contributions of Latinos in media. The event took place at the historic Beverly Wilshire Hotel and was emceed by Roselyn Sanchez, star in Lifetime’s Devious Maids, and Lisa Vidal, star in BET’s Being Mary Jane. This year honorees were Carlos Ponce (Cristela), Melissa Fumero (Brooklyn Nine-Nine), Jon Seda (Chicago P.D), Jorge R. Gutierrez (The Book of Life), Golden Globe-winning actress Gina Rodriguez (Jane the Virgin) and MiTú, Inc., which received the inaugural Outstanding Innovation in Social Media award. Andy Garcia presented an emotional memorial tribute to his dear friend, actress Elizabeth Peña.

NHMC Local Impact Awards Luncheon

NHMC honored five highly esteemed and respected Latino media professionals at its 13th Annual NHMC Local Impact Awards Luncheon at the Hilton Universal City in Los Angeles. The 2015 NHMC Impact Award recipients were local talent in Los Angeles - the second largest designated market area (DMA), and largest DMA by Latino population, in the country - and were recognized for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the region's Latino community: Daniella Guzman, NBC4 morning news anchor; Rick Lozano, FOX 11 reporter and anchor; Diane Medina, Vice President - Diversity Programs and Community Relations at KABC-TV; Alejandro Mendoza, Univision reporter; and Lynette Romero, KTLA 5 morning news reporter and anchor. Real 92.3 host Big Boy, FOX 11 news anchor Laura Diaz and CBS2 news anchor Rick Garcia returned as the event's masters of ceremonies, bringing their energy and enthusiasm to the stage.
NHMC New York Impact Awards Reception

In October, NHMC celebrated its inaugural New York Impact Awards reception at Google’s Chelsea Market Space. John Quiñones, ABC News anchor and correspondent, and host of *What Would You Do?*, emceed the event. Over 100 industry leaders gathered to recognize local talent in New York — the largest designated market area (DMA) in the country — for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the region’s Latino community.

NHMC Washington, DC Impact Awards Reception

In November, NHMC celebrated its 6th Annual NHMC Washington, D.C. Impact Awards Reception at the National Association of Broadcasters' headquarters. At the reception, NHMC honored Congresswoman Anna Eshoo (D-CA 18) and Congressman José Serrano (D-NY 15) for their Outstanding Public Service. Joe Torres, of Free Press, received the inaugural Outstanding Advocate Impact Award. The event honors public servants and community leaders, as well as media professionals and entities, whose achievements, generosity of spirit, and courage under fire have greatly benefited the welfare of the nation in the areas of media and telecommunications.
Affordable and Open Communications for All

A Voice for Latinos in Washington, D.C.

Promoting Policies for Low-Cost Telephone and Broadband Services

This year, concrete proposals were made to modernize Lifeline, a federal program that provides a modest subsidy to low income consumers to help them afford basic telephone service. NHMC has been a long-time proponent of expanding Lifeline to fully include broadband services. Vice President of Policy, Michael Scurato, spoke at events and panels to highlight the potential of the modernization of Lifeline to help spur broadband adoption and close the digital divide. In October, NHMC joined several ally organizations in sponsoring a widely-attended Congressional briefing in which Scurato detailed the program’s importance within the Latino community. Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Jessica J. Gonzalez, testified in support of Lifeline before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation, Subcommittee on Communications in June – the second time that she has been called to share her expertise on Lifeline with Congress. Ahead of the hearing, NHMC applauded proposed Congressional legislation calling for program modernization. Towards the end of the year, NHMC filed substantive comments and reply comments with the FCC offering input into how the FCC should modernize Lifeline. NHMC’s comments included extensive research about the digital divide and its causes, as well as the struggles our communities face when they are unable to obtain access to broadband.

Preserving Equality on the Internet

In February, NHMC and its allies achieved a major victory when the FCC decided to reclassify broadband Internet access service as a non-discriminatory common carrier service and adopt the strongest consumer protections for Internet users in its history. Throughout the year, NHMC has defended the FCC’s decision to adopt strong “Net Neutrality” rules that prevent blocking and harmful discrimination online and that preserve the many opportunities that the Internet has afforded Latinos and others. NHMC educated key decision makers at the FCC and on Capitol Hill about the importance of an Open Internet to communities of color – including co-hosting a successful briefing and day of visits on Capitol Hill. During the fight for Net Neutrality, NHMC filed comments and reply comments at the FCC on behalf of the Voices for Internet Freedom coalition and dozens of organizations. NHMC’s Jessica Gonzalez testified before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology in
January, explaining the importance of an open Internet to communities of color. This past July, Vice President of Policy Michael Scurato was also invited to discuss the Net Neutrality victory at Netroots Nation—one of the largest political conventions in the country. Further, NHMC produced educational two-pagers, released videos and published blog posts, participated in creating other informative materials, organized meetings between Latino content producers and entrepreneurs and decision makers, hosted discussion forums, and took part in numerous public panels. Today, the FCC’s authority is being challenged in the U.S. Court of Appeals, but NHMC remains confident the courts will rule in the Commission’s favor, allowing it to continue to protect the Internet from uncompetitive practices. NHMC filed an amicus brief on behalf of itself and several other organizations in September, petitioning the Court to affirm the FCC’s rules. NHMC has also worked with several Congressional offices to ensure no policy riders harming the open Internet are included in end-of-the-year appropriation bills.

Engaging with Broadband Opportunity Council

Earlier this year, President Obama created the Broadband Opportunity Council—a collection of 25 federal agencies and departments—that would investigate how to support greater broadband deployment nationwide. NHMC played an active role in advocating before several of these agencies and filing comments with many recommendations, including the modernization of the Lifeline program. In September, the Council released initial findings, which included many of NHMC’s recommendations. NHMC looks forward to continuing to work with the Council in finding solutions to help get more American families connected to the Internet.

Securing Victories at the Federal Communications Commission

NHMC played a vital role in pushing for several measures that succeeded at the FCC this year—including municipal broadband access and prison phone rate reform. On the same day the FCC voted to adopt open Internet rules, the Commission also granted petitions by two municipal broadband providers to preempt certain state laws in North Carolina and Tennessee that restricted communities’ abilities to provide broadband service. NHMC joined several allies in filing comments asking the FCC to empower such communities. The decision set a tremendous precedent for other municipalities across the country seeking to create their own networks to connect residents despite pressure from incumbent ISPs. Likewise, NHMC participated in the proceeding that eventually led the FCC to approving limits on prison phone rates that had significantly limited communication between the incarcerated and their loved ones. NHMC called on the FCC to combat this unjust financial burden and helped spearhead a successful Congressional briefing that brought families impacted by these high costs to Capitol Hill shortly before the FCC instituted its decision.
Taking Nationwide Leadership Roles

This past year, NHMC was invited to take part in several national committees, including the FCC’s Consumer Advisory Committee and the American Library Association’s (ALA) Public Policy Advisory Council. Within its capacity with the FCC, NHMC has made direct recommendations to the FCC and is charged with helping facilitate Commission interaction with consumer interests.