

## Leading, Learning And Giving Back To The Community – A Night In The City Of San Fernando



Written by San Fernando Valley Sun

Thursday, 21 November 2013 07:20



Congressman Tony Cárdenas and his wife Norma Cárdenas.

On November 6th local leaders Congressman Tony Cárdenas and his wife Norma Cárdenas were joined by San Fernando Mayor Antonio Lopez, San Fernando Chief of Police Robert Parks, Gloria Lazalde, a Founding Youth Speak Board Member; Miguel Sanches, a former Youth Speak Scholar; and Kaiser Permanente, a great partner in providing health access for young people within diverse communities throughout Southern California.

They shared their commitment to serving and improving the lives of individuals in the San Fernando Valley at a fundraising event hosted by Youth Speak Collective a local nonprofit that empowers young people and helps propel them to success in school and in life.

During his remarks Mayor Lopez applauded Youth Speak Collective for the positive impact the organization's programs are having in the San Fernando Valley community.





(Left to Right) Youth Speak Collective's Executive Director, David Kietzman, Norma Cárdenas, Youth Speak participants Jessica Torres, Griselda Rodríguez, Itzel Peña, Ashley Noble, Luz Nuñez, Rose Hernandez and Congressman Tony Cárdenas.

Congressman Tony Cárdenas and his wife Norma Cárdenas, Gloria Lazalde, Miguel Sanches and Kaiser Permanente were all honored with leadership awards from Youth Speak Collective. Congressman Cárdenas highlighted the importance of family and building positive relationships within the community as he and his wife Norma have done throughout their lives in the Valley.

In preparation for the event Norma Cardenas shared her thoughts on effective leadership with Youth Speak Collective's Executive Director, David Kietzman:

**David:** What makes someone a leader?

**Cárdenas:** I think everyone is a natural born leader. A leader really is a teacher and a learner . . . it is a reciprocal circle.

**David:** Leading, teaching, learning and contributing.

**Cárdenas:** Yes, a person can't just be in leadership mode, they should be consistently growing and developing. I grew up in this community and got to a point where I woke up ... leaders wake up and try to understand the perspectives of others and explore those perspectives rather than just judging them. Through this learning and leading we create the avenues for the next generation to do the same thing [lead, teach, learn and contribute].



Gloria Lazalde, David Kietzman and Deborah Davies

This reciprocal model of leadership is a positive example for young people living in the San Fernando Valley. It is one that Youth Speak Collective uses to help students create brighter futures for themselves and for the community.

"We were extremely happy to be able to host our annual event in the City of San Fernando at Library Plaza. Thank you to the 100+ attendees that came to support our youth and programs. Because of everyone's generosity and our community partners we were able to raise \$20,000 that will go towards community focused programs in the city." – David Kietzman, Youth Speak Collective Executive Director.

The event took place at San Fernando's Library Plaza in the center of the City of San Fernando. Food was provided by the Library Bistro, a new restaurant offering fresh and decidedly delightful selection dishes from enchiladas to a succulent turkey burger. One highlight of the evening was a visit to the VIP lounge in the Champions Only Barbershop within San Fernando's Library Plaza owned and operated by Gary Ballin who is a fine craftsman and collector of boxing memorabilia.

The local band Hijos De La Tierra played live cumbia music and shared the spot light with MC Lab, a unique DJ training program for high school students at Cesar Chavez Learning Academies. Guests danced the night away in celebration of community and in support of a wonderful cause.

In addition, many local businesses supported the event including: 55 Degree Wine, Aszkenazy Development, Cal State Northridge, Carefree Gourmet, Cold Stone Creamery, Community Recycling, Crusberg Properties, Dake+Luna Consulting, Emerging Markets, Glendale Adventist, Hamer Toyota, House of Brews, Ice House Comedy Club & Restaurant, It's A Habit! Company, Kaiser Permanente, Kiwanis Club of San Fernando, Laurel Canyon Holdings, Le Petit Hotel, Library Bistro, Los Angeles Zoo, Los Angeles Dodgers, McLab, Mr. Bartender, Norma Blaque Studios, Olivarez Madruga Law Firm, Pacoima Development Federal Credit Union, Pacoima Chamber of Commerce, Planet Soccer, Proyecto Mariposa, PRP Wine International, Roclord Studios, San Fernando Florist, Senator Alex Padilla, Southern California Edison, Union Bank, VEDC, Youth Speak Media Solutions

*To learn more about Youth Speak Collective visit their website at [www.youthspeakcollective.org](http://www.youthspeakcollective.org) or by calling (818) 890-2928.*