

# LAA Newsletter - Winter 2016



## Latin American Association

### LAA Holds First Latina Empowerment Conference This Month

*Daylong event aims at inspiring and empowering hundreds of Latinas*

More than 500 Latinas will gather on February 27 at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta for the Latin American Association's [¡Avanzando Juntas! 1st Annual Latina Empowerment Conference](#).

The daylong event is focused on inspiring and empowering Latinas in their journey of personal and economic growth. Topics at the conference include writing a business plan, finding a job, making a budget and developing self-esteem. The conference is part of the LAA's Latinas Economic Empowerment Program, which was created with funds awarded by The Coca-Cola Foundation.



*Mariela Romero*

Mariela Romero of Univision 34 Atlanta will be the mistress of ceremonies and panel moderator. WSB-TV anchor and reporter Wendy Corona, the daughter of Mexican immigrants who is living her dream of working as a journalist, will be the conference's keynote speaker.

Corona will share her inspiring story about growing up in California and being the first in her family to go to college. Though at first she aspired to go to a community college, thanks to the encouragement of others, she ended up graduating from the University of Southern California, a prestigious private university.

"Education can be what gets you out of poverty and prepares you for new opportunities," she says. "I was the first in my family to graduate with a degree. I feel like I got my foot in the door and propped it open for other family members to come through."

**Many thanks to The Coca-Cola Foundation, which provided funds to launch the conference, and to our sponsors: Gold: Cox Enterprises, McDonald's. Silver: BB&T, Country Financial, Kuck Immigration Partners, MARTA, Medciphers, SunTrust, Turner, Events Boutik. Media: Univision 34 Atlanta, Vida 96.5, MundoHisánico, Qué Pasa en Atlanta?**



*Wendy Corona*

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## Latina U.S. Treasurer to Speak at This Year's Compañeros Luncheon

The [27th Annual Compañeros Awards Luncheon](#) this spring will feature keynote speaker Rosa Gumataotao Ríos, a Latina who has served as the treasurer of the United States since 2009.

This year's Compañeros luncheon will be held on Thursday, April 14 at the Georgia Aquarium, starting at 11 a.m.

Those who will be recognized at Compañeros are:

2016 Olga C. de Goizueta Pacesetter Award: The Honorable Dax Lopez

2016 Corporate Champion: Comcast

2016 Volunteer of the Year: Abbey Wojno and Mauricio Lascano

2016 Inspiration Award: Florencia Zepeda

2016 LAA Ambassador of the Year: Jeffrey Tapia

For tickets and sponsorships, please contact Evelyn Reyes at [atereyes@thelaa.org](mailto:atereyes@thelaa.org) or [404.471.1892](tel:404.471.1892).



*U.S. Treasurer Rosa Ríos*



## Sponsor Spotlight: The Coca-Cola Company

*The Coca-Cola Company*

The Coca-Cola Company provides tremendous support for LAA programs and events each year, including serving as presenting sponsor of our Compañeros Awards Luncheon for the past 11 years and as a diamond sponsor of Latin Fever Ball. The Coca-Cola Company supports critical LAA programs through grants and in-kind contributions.

Launched in 2014 with a \$300,000 gift and multiyear commitment from The Coca-Cola Foundation, the LAA's Latinas Economic Empowerment Program promotes the economic advancement of low-income Latinas. This is achieved through education, vocational training and entrepreneurship. The program features life skills; English classes; business education courses; mentorship and networking; and a microlending fund.

Coca-Cola also has had representation on our board of directors for many years. Humberto García-Sjögrim is our current board member from Coca-Cola.





## LAA Staffer Enjoys Helping with Homeless Count

LAA Family Services case worker Thomas Fuller has been helping DeKalb County count its homeless population for years.

On a recent winter evening, Fuller set out for the unsheltered count in Doraville, accompanied by four bilingual volunteers and a police officer.

"We searched under bridges and in the woods and inside of vehicles," says Fuller, a longtime staffer. "That night some people were living on the streets in places not meant for human habitation."



*Thomas Fuller*

Fuller says that most people are homeless due to job loss, mental health problems, illegal eviction stemming from issues with their landlords or financial problems.

Though Fuller has been doing the counts since 2003, he still enjoys the experience and learns from each count.

"Homeless counts can provide important lessons for anyone working in the human services field and even for me, who's been doing this for years," he says. "Participating in the census is a reminder of the daily struggles the homeless face and of the importance of our work."

MundoHisánico reporter Johanes Roselló and photographer Miguel Martínez were on hand during the evening Thomas joined the homeless count this year.

See the story at [mundohispanico.com/not.../sin-techo-pero-con-ilusiones](http://mundohispanico.com/not.../sin-techo-pero-con-ilusiones)



## LAA Paralegal Gets Ready to Vote for First Time after Gaining Citizenship

On the day of her 33rd birthday last month, Immigration Services paralegal Mariana Maneiro became a U.S. citizen after living in this country for 15 years.

Maneiro, who majored in international affairs at Kennesaw State University and has a master's degree in human rights from University College London, is most excited about being able to vote for the first time in her life. She left Maracaibo, Venezuela, at 18 to study English in the U.S.

Maneiro has never voted in her life and is excited about voting for the first time. As a Venezuelan citizen, she has never been able to vote for her government representatives while living abroad.

"I can't wait to vote for the first time in my life," Maneiro says. "Being able to elect your government representatives is very important. I was never able to vote as a Venezuelan so I am very much looking forward to vote in the upcoming primaries and for president in November."

If you are eligible to vote and have not registered yet, [click on this link](#).



*Mariana Maneiro poses with her daughter on the day she became a U.S. citizen.*





Your donation helps Latino immigrants achieve their American dream. [Please click here to make a donation today.](#)



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