

## EL BRINDIS of BORICUA COLLEGE for the NEW YEAR

For the past 46 years, on December 31 at 12:00 o'clock of the Old year, the staff, faculty and friends of Boricua College, gather to give thanks to each other for a year of work and accomplishment in the continuing creation of the College. It is a ritual we have come to call El Brindis for the New Year. This year we must make it a spiritual brindis.

“A Long Long Time Ago in a Galaxy Far-Far Away”, in February 1974, Boricua College was created at 9 Graham Avenue, Brooklyn. The following December 31, of that same 1974, at 12:00 o'clock noon, a small group of bold visionaries, who had the audacity to attempt the creation of a Puerto Rican college for all New York City, met on the top floor of that small loft building at 9 Graham Avenue to congratulate each other because we had survived the first year of that awesome task.

We held hands in a circle: Agustin Rivera the first Dean, Maria Morales the first Faculty Facilitator, and the first 26 students. Standing on a bright fire-red carpet that covered a circular hole on the floor caused by the first test by fire Boricua College was to experience in its history. Little did we know that the circle we formed on that fire-red carpet would become our “Areito”, the symbol of our continuous colloquium, the fulcrum of our learning dialectic, where the intellectual and affective process translate our experiences into knowledge.

Back in 1974, few in our community believed we could succeed, and those that did gave only tacit support to a cause that seemed far

beyond our reach. Nevertheless we persevered, fueled by the passion of our unity and the commitment to a community in need. Today, Boricua College has three campus centers in three of the City's boroughs, owns all its buildings and continues as a renowned mid-size, liberal arts college, with a humanistic multicultural philosophy as the first private Hispanic-Latino college on the U.S. mainland. Its highly regarded experimental educational system is dedicated to the generic principles of the liberal arts and sciences, teacher training, the human services, and a business administration program that promoted a business development center inaugurated with a visit in January 2,000 by the President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton.

Almost 13,000 degrees have been awarded by the College, changing the lives of thousands of families. Boricua College contributes millions of dollars each year to the local economy of small businesses that surround our campus centers, as well as contributing hundreds of teachers, school principals, human services, business and scholarly professionals that enrich the civic and cultural life of New York City and elsewhere.

This year of the COVID-19 pandemic, Boricua College has remained steadfast in its support of our community of students by providing each of them with \$1,400 for personal expenses, a laptop computer and printer for the over 1,000 on-line courses, while still providing the individualized and small group direct instruction by our experienced Faculty Facilitators.

This coming Thursday, December 31, 2020 at 12:00 o'clock noon of our 46<sup>th</sup> year, I want to share a *Spiritual Brindis* with all of you. Let us hold hands together in a Spiritual Circle to honor the illustrious historical legacy of Boricua College; to honor those who are no

longer with us; and to bring closure to the worst year in recent history. Let us embrace the New Year 2021 with grace and gratitude and the audacity of hope, health and love. **EL BRINDIS.**