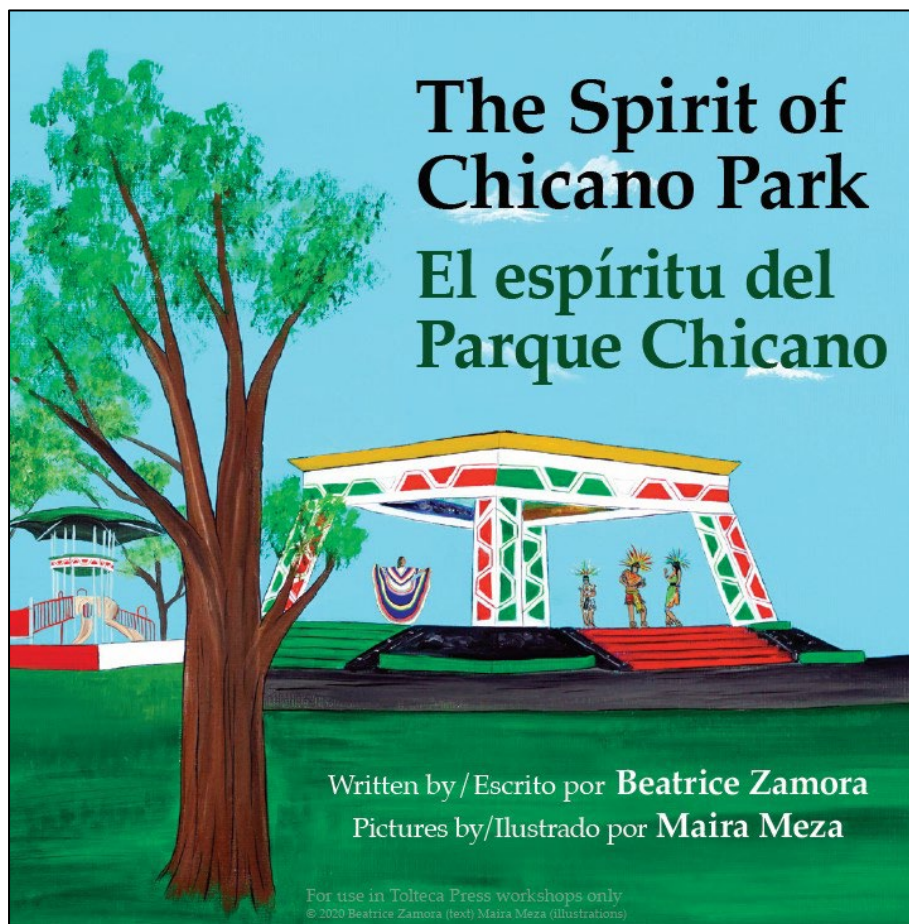


2021 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Spirit of Chicano Park



Chicano Park, located in San Diego, California, was established by the people of Logan Heights for the people of San Diego and beyond. The Park was created out of a community struggle that resulted in a 12-day occupation known as The Park Takeover. The project, *The Spirit of Chicano Park/El espíritu del Parque Chicano*, is a children's bilingual book that tells the story of this historic landmark. The significance of Chicano Park in restoring and rehabilitating a community that had been attacked by changes in zoning laws and the construction of Interstate 5 and the Coronado Bridge is documented in the book.

The struggle for Chicano Park symbolizes the Chicano-Mexicano peoples struggle for self-determination and self-empowerment. Historically, the community of Logan Heights had thrived as a small, self-reliant neighborhood. For decades, community residents had asked city officials to build a park in the barrio. In 1970, the Chicano Park Steering Committee (CPSC) was formed to direct the community effort to build the park. Activists demanded that the property under the bridge become a park where Chicano history could be expressed through art, and families could enjoy green space. The 12-day Park Takeover coalesced a community of all ages

working together to clear the land and plant it. Finally, an agreement was reached between the Chicano community and the City/State to build the park. Since then, Chicano Park has earned international recognition as a major public art site for its commanding mural paintings of Mexican and Chicano history. It has local and state historical landmark status and is a National Historic Landmark as well.

The project is innovative for its decision to publish a children's book with bilingual text—English and Spanish—for the purpose of teaching children and families the significance of this small park. Author Beatrice Zamora, who has been a community volunteer at the park for nearly 40 years, worked closely with the Chicano Park Steering Committee for direction and quality control. Each fact was checked by the committee and compared to various historical documents. Ms. Zamora interviewed at least 15 individuals involved with the founding and ongoing development of the park for over 50 years. Twelve of those community champions are showcased in the back pages of the book. Illustrator Maira Meza reviewed various historic documents and old photos to depict in the illustrations accurate historical sites that were in the neighborhood. She studied current murals and helped to identify those to be included in the project. Tolteca Press, an independently owned publishing company, funded the project, and secured all releases and provided layout, design, editing, copyrighting, and Library of Congress recordings.

The Spirit of Chicano Park preserves within its pages the story of the place and people of Chicano Park and provides resources for the ongoing development and caretaking of the park. All net proceeds from the sale of the book are being donated to the CPSC for current and future needs such as mural restoration and commemorative celebrations, as well as to the new Chicano Park Museum and Cultural Center being built at the park. *The Spirit of Chicano Park*, a project led by the community, for the community, was published in April 2020, just in time to honor Chicano Park's 50th anniversary.