

# neighbor to neighbor

COMMUNITY NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF ORANGE

## CHAPMAN ALUMNA COMES FULL CIRCLE AS FRIENDLY CENTER CEO

A cornerstone of the Orange community since 1924, Friendly Center is celebrating its 100th year of service by looking forward to the next 100 years. Leading the way is new Friendly Center CEO Kenia Hernandez Cueto, a Chapman University alumna who earned her Ph.D. in education in 2017.

Born and raised in Orange County by immigrant parents, Cueto knows firsthand the difference a community-based organization like Friendly Center can make in the lives of students and families.

“As a child, I benefited from services provided by nonprofits like Friendly Center. Reflecting on this, I find myself in a full circle moment,” she shared. Her journey from facing academic challenges as a student to conducting scholarly research and gaining professional experience in education and community service has been transformative. “With my background and personal connection to the challenges faced by underserved communities, joining this nonprofit was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up. It’s a wonderful organization, and everything just aligned perfectly for me to take on this role.”

Friendly Center was started by a men’s group from a multi-denominational Bible study group who wanted to help migrant workers in the citrus fields in the City of Orange. Since its founding, the center has grown to provide food and basic needs, family support and education throughout Orange County.

Friendly Center’s new pivot in career technical education (CTE) lies at the heart of the center’s plans for the future, with programs that address the urgent need for stability, opportunity and hope, says Cueto. This summer, the center will offer a drone technology boot camp in partnership with

Fullerton College to Richland High School’s CTE and foster youth students. The Friendly Center is also developing partnerships to offer education in areas such as AI, financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

“We want to align ourselves with our local schools to see how we can all work together to support our community and the workforce,” she says, adding that Chapman has a long history of partnering with the center through internships, tutoring programs, donations and funding.

She hopes to develop deeper relationships with the university’s schools and colleges over the next few months, offering opportunities for research and hands-on learning.

“We are engaged in a reciprocal partnership with students and our community,” she said. “It’s all about mutual support and working together to transform lives and our community. I love that we’re supporting each other and I am grateful.”



*Kenia Hernandez Cueto (Ph.D. '17) speaks at Friendly Center's 100th birthday celebration on April 8, which was honored as Friendly Center Day by the City of Orange.*

## LOCAL STUDENT REPRESENTS COMMUNITY AT STATE OF THE UNION

Valeria Delgado '24 went from rubbing shoulders with members of Congress to catching up on her coursework in the span of a few days.

“Last Thursday I was listening to the president and today I’m studying for my genetics test,” Delgado said the day after returning from the State of the Union address in Washington, D.C.

Delgado attended with Rep. Lou Correa, whose district includes Orange, Anaheim, Fullerton, Santa Ana and Stanton. Delgado, who is a health sciences major at Chapman University, works as a medical scribe at Children’s Hospital of Orange



*Valeria Delgado '24, Rep. Lou Correa and Chapman University Director for Hispanic/Latinx Achievement Gabriela Castaneda, Ed.D., in Washington, D.C.*

County and is involved with the student first aid team and the Red Cross.

“It was such a surreal experience being at the State of the Union in person versus watching it on TV,” she said. “Being there in the same room as the president — wow.”

Delgado’s parents were excited for her, even more so because of their own challenges, Delgado said. Those challenges were an inspiration for Delgado’s plan to become a physician assistant.

“My parents are Spanish speaking and seeing how their health care process works, I want to be able to fill in that gap and help the community overall,” said Delgado, who grew up in Orange County and whose family is from the western Mexican state of Nayarit.

After visiting D.C., she saw parallels between government and health care.

“There’s a lot happening behind the scenes to keep the country running,” she said.

Her time in D.C. only furthered her passion for improving health care for the underprivileged and being an advocate for underserved communities.

“My neighborhood is predominantly Latino and I see a lot of health care disparities, and just

working at the hospital showed me there’s gaps I want to fill,” she said. “I’m still so passionate about health care and being a patient advocate ... I think that’s where I can get the best results for my community.”

### Did You Know?

This fall, 850 students will move into Chapman’s newest residence hall, Chapman Court, located in Anaheim’s Platinum Triangle. Students will enjoy all the benefits of off-campus, apartment-style living with free and easy access to campus via shuttle. Chapman Court is the university’s second residence hall in Anaheim. Chapman Grand, which is home to approximately 900 students, opened in 2018.

#### Need to report a concern?

- Contact Chapman University’s Office of Community Relations at (714) 289-2097 or email [neighbors@chapman.edu](mailto:neighbors@chapman.edu).
- To report a disturbance that needs urgent attention, please call City of Orange PD dispatch at (714) 744-7444.

# YOU'RE INVITED!

Join us for these engaging events at Chapman.

There are many terrific Chapman University in-person and virtual events, and neighbors are always welcome. Here are just a few. Find more at the university's online events calendar, [events.chapman.edu](https://events.chapman.edu). Advance tickets for performing arts events may be purchased online at [tickets.chapman.edu](https://tickets.chapman.edu).

## Gospel Voices of OC - Sacred Sounds, Soulful Queens

Saturday, June 8, 7 p.m.  
Musco Center for the Arts

Join us for an extraordinary event chronicling the lives of African American artistic masters across choral, dance, band and theater genres. In its third season, Gospel Voices of OC commemorates June 19, 1865 to present day. This year we honor women who helped shape artistic history in our nation. Come and experience a Juneteenth celebration of freedom and excellence, sure to inspire people of all ages. Tickets start at \$38. Visit [muscocenter.org](https://muscocenter.org) to reserve your seats.

## Messengers of Memory: A 25-Year Retrospective

Through July 31  
Hilbert Museum of California Art

This special curated exhibition highlights 25 years of prize-winning entries in the Holocaust Art & Writing Contest. This extraordinary exhibition includes winning entries from students attending 84 middle and high schools in 52 cities and 11 states in the U.S. and two other countries. Visitors can view student artwork and excerpts of submitted prose and poetry and watch up to 12 student films on a video loop. Museum admission is free but reservations are recommended. Visit [hilbertmuseum.org](https://hilbertmuseum.org) for more information.

## Summer Engineering Academy

June & July  
Swenson Family Hall of Engineering

Fowler School of Engineering proudly offers engineering workshops for high school students over the summer. Topics include Design and Fabrication, Intro to Machine Learning: Mining Data for Fun and Profit, Arduino Smart Car and Game Development. Registration deadline is June 24. Visit [chapman.edu/sea](https://chapman.edu/sea) for more information.



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Find more news at  
[NeighborsOfChapman.com](https://NeighborsOfChapman.com)

## CHAPMAN CELEBRATES THE CITY OF ORANGE

The Force was with Chapman students and alumni at the annual May Parade. The Star Wars-themed event ("Come to the Orange Side") was sponsored by the Orange Chamber of Commerce and brought the community together for fun and festivities in Old Towne Orange.



More inside! 