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FURSCA

Summer 2023

 **“The Creation”**

For my FURSCA project, my intentions and goal is to use this project to create a platform and representation for the Latino / Hispanic community. I was inspired to take upon this project due to the personal experiences that either myself or other people have had here in Albion College that made me realize the lack of awareness and representation there is of the Latino / Hispanic community. Some of those experiences included calling our names “exotic” because it’s not a name they grew up listening to, celebrating holidays without knowing the purpose of it and not knowing how to properly celebrate, etc.

I approached this project by interviewing people who identify as part of the Latino / Hispanic community who were willing to share their life stories with me in order to create representation for the community. To be more specific, I was not looking for the participants who have a specific point of view towards the Latino community, I didn’t want this project to be about suffering, each interview was completely different based on each participant’s background. I worked on creating my questions and adding more participants to the project for the first week and a half. I created flyers and passed them out at the farmer’s market, pinned them up in different stores and in different buildings in the school, and lastly posted them up on different social media platforms. The main part of the project was to photograph the participants to use their portraits in an exhibition we’ll have in the Art department which will also include a written up summary of the participant’s interviews. After interviewing the participants, we made an appointment to meet up to take their portraits. Some of the participants I met up with for a second photo shoot because they were involved in letting me apply SFX (special effects) makeup onto them to create a before and after picture with the unique look that was created based on the person’s life story. The point of the SFX makeup is to let the participant demonstrate anything they want to portray like any sort of trauma, anything they resonate with, or a lesson to show.After finishing taking the portraits, I edited them on different apps like Snapseed, Photoshop and Lightroom. Since I worked with two different cameras, a digital one and a film camera, I also had to unroll and develop the film pictures in the photography room by using different chemicals in order to safely process the film. During that time I was reaching the end of FURSCA so I was typing out the participant’s interviews for the remaining days.

I was a bit bummed out that I wasn’t able to finish most of the steps during my summer time on campus, I was supposed to be able to print out my digital pictures and create different types of prints or at least experiment with different print materials and I wanted to be able to work in the dark room in the Art department to print out the developed rolls from the print camera. I wasn’t planning on adding additional people to my project, but the more people heard about it, the more they wanted to participate which was fantastic because it made me realize that there are people from the Latino / Hispanic community, there is just no space for them to feel welcomed in Albion. I learned through the interviews that the participants wanted to create a physical community / space for them too because they feel isolated. Some of their reasonings were that there is no spanish religious services to attend, there are no spanish signs for the rest of the community to attend the events, there is a lack of food supplies that are diverse enough to create other cultural food, the community’s social media groups are all in english and the language barrier blocks the non english speaking people from having accessible resources here to find jobs or even be able to open up their own businesses. With that being said, I will be working with the participants and other members from the community to create a space and try to create accessible resources and create other possibilities.

This summer, I was able to have the most rewarding opportunity to bring this research to life. My advisor, Ashley Feagin, was the one who pushed me the most and was the one who believed that I was capable of creating something worthwhile and for that I am eternally grateful because I wouldn’t have mustered up the courage to take this upon myself. I want to thank Renee and Elizabeth for motivating us by providing fun and interactive activities which helped keep the summer alive. Last, but absolutely not least, I want to thank Vernon and Gladys B. Lawson Endowed Research Fellowship for providing me with this amazing opportunity, it has been the most rewarding experience and it gave me the chance to help others be heard and to be a part of not only the Albion College community but, the Albion community. Thank you.