

Social Worker and Youth Counselor to Give 2024 César Chávez Lecture on Sept. 11

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To many of the kids in Chicago's Brighton Park neighborhood, **Yahtzeni "Zeni" Gonzalez** has been a mentor, a sister, even a mother figure.

Gonzalez is a social worker, a counselor, and manager of Brighton Park's Leaders of Tomorrow Program, where she helps youth aspire to go to college and "see more than just the neighborhood."

She will talk about her life and work on Sept. 11, when she presents "Born Out of ... and the Struggle Continues," this year's César Chávez Intercultural Lecture at Elmhurst University.

Growing up in Chicago's Little Village, Gonzalez says she always knew she wanted to be a social worker. Although her family was poor, Gonzalez was inspired by her grandmother's unfailing generosity and impact on her community. The slaying of Gonzalez's older brother's eight years ago spurred her to try to stop the cycle of violence in her neighborhood by becoming a positive adult figure in young people's lives as a counselor who has worked on the streets and in the schools.

The César Chávez Intercultural Lecture begins at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 11, in the Founders Lounge of the Frick Center. Public lectures and other cultural programming at Elmhurst University support community engagement and lifelong learning, and prepare our students to thrive as adaptive leaders.

Admission is free but reservations are encouraged by visiting elmhurst.edu/cultural. Questions? Email marketing@elmhurst.edu.