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[Chicano Studies Research Center Reopens](#)

By [Monica Ponce de Leon](#)
 – March 13, 2011 **Posted in:** [Universidad](#)



Chantal Rodriguez speaks at the CSRC re-opening. Photo by CSRC.

After 40 years of piles of papers, white walls, aged computers and limited space, the [Chicano Studies Research Center \(CSRC\)](#) decided it was time for a well-deserved change. On March 8 they revealed their newly remodeled site in an event to celebrate their re-opening.

The library’s importance is not limited to its updated appearance. “[The CSRC] disseminates knowledge to the public; it’s not just functional but a breathed culture,” said library director Chon Noriega.

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With newly-painted red walls displaying original art pieces from Chicano artists, books, and new computers, the library can clearly represent the progression of Chicano studies.

Pro Bono architect Fred Fisher, with the help of a young Chicana architect Victoria Padilla- Lima, helped to plan the remodeling of the library. The color red gives one the sense of being in a Chicano library and feeling welcomed, Padilla-Limas explained.

The CSRC currently holds 1/3 of California's Chicano collections, including original US and Mexico audio recordings.

The Chicano Archive Series has four books in print, including two books by a Loyola Marymount professor Karen Mary Davalos, a speaker at the opening event, whose research was principally done in this library.

A graduate student in the theater department at the time, Chantal Rodriguez, described how the library helped her launch her career. She confessed her hardship at the beginning of the program to unable to find a niche were she felt she belonged.

However, an offer to write a book about Chicano theater changed her life. She published her book in 2011 titled "[The Latino Theatre Initiative/Center Theatre Group Papers, 1980-2005.](#)" Now Rodriguez teaches at the California Institute of the Arts.

Raul Pacheco, co-founder of musical group Ozomatli, spoke about the importance of the role of activism in the arts and that a place like this library helped to preserve this.

Many students and researchers have found their home and life's work here with this renovation only continuing that tradition. "Most students see the library as a home away from home, now there's an upgrade to that home," said Lizette Guerra, CSRC librarian.

Tags: [chicano studies research center](#), [Lizette Guerra](#), [Remodel](#), [Reopening](#), [ucla](#)
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[20 Years of Building Hope Through Jobs](#)

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[Mariana Mancias](#)

– March 11, 2011 **Posted in:** [Universidad](#)



Father Gregory Boyle speaks at the Chicano Studies Research Center on Jan. 26. Photo by Chicano Studies Research Center.

Father Gregory Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries, spoke of his gang intervention experience at the Chicano Studies Research Center on Jan. 26, as he promoted his first book, "Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion."

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He began his mission as a priest looking for a safe spot for neighboring youth and now Father Boyle is an award-winning speaker, gang consultant to various agencies, and member of the National Gang Center Advisory Board.

Growing up in the Los Angeles area in a large Irish-American family, Father Boyle knows the dangers youth face in gang involvement. He accredits his family support system as the reason for not joining the gang life. "I never would have joined a gang, but that doesn't make me morally superior," said Father Boyle.

After receiving his master's in English from Loyola Marymount University, he received a Master of Divinity from the Weston School of Theology and a Master of Sacred Theology from the Jesuit School of Theology. After doing missionary work outside of the United States, he returned to Los Angeles in 1992 and established Homeboy Bakery, an independent nonprofit organization that provides former gang members with a safe environment and skills to join the workforce. It has expanded to Homegirl Café and Catering, Homeboy Silkscreen and Logo Service, and Homeboy Maintenance. The organization offers services including counseling, free laser tattoo removal, and skill development workshops.

As the largest gang intervention center in the United States, he admits that he and the organization have had their share of difficulties financially, as well as with the public and the police. He has had to endure bomb and death threats, receive hate mail, see his bakery burn in 1999, and survive leukemia, but he still holds strongly onto his mission. "There is no 'us' or 'them;' it is an illusion," said Father Boyle in relation to how people may be reluctant to relate to gang members.

The book, which took 20 years to write, is meant for a broad audience. He describes the novel as talking about what matters, "It is a string of stories bound together using vague themes. It is about the lethal absence of hope," said Father Boyle.

Rather than promote his achievements at the reading, he did as he has done throughout his 20-year career: promote understanding. "Knowing my truth is your truth; your truth is the gang member's truth," said Father Boyle.

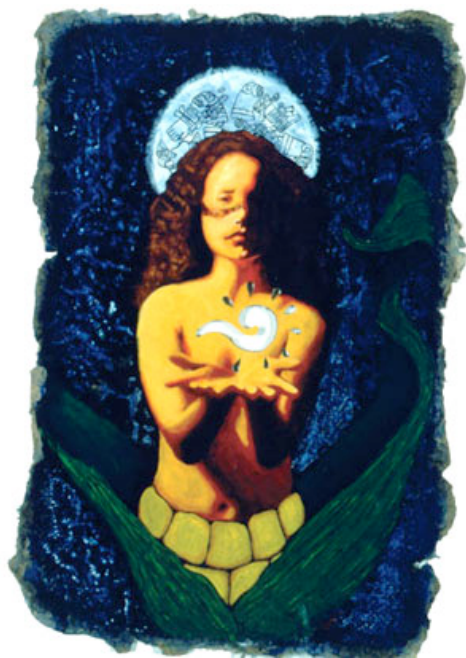
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