

REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Noticias del mes/News of the month

Notes from the Editor

June brings heat and rain, but it also brings pride for Lucia, our President-Elect, who was honored with a Tot Lot at the North Miami Public Library. News of the dedication, as well as photos, headline this month's edition.

We're also proud of members who presented at the recent FLA conference and the Power Breakfast sponsored by Spanish Publishers, which featured author Julio Bevione.

I would like to introduce new member and columnist David Hernandez Rivero. His new column of tips and advice for established librarians titled "Latineando" along with Gabby's column for beginner librarians "Dear Future Librarian" will be fonts of knowledge for all our REFORMistas.

Many more articles of interest lie within these pages, including information on the Largo Public Library's ELL Program as well as how to apply for Noche mini grants, so read and enjoy.

Alma Ramos-McDermott
Editor

Lucia Martinez González *Tot Lot Dedication*

by Alma Ramos-McDermott

Saturday May 17th was an important day for our REFORMA de Florida familia as the **Lucia Martinez González Tot Lot** was dedicated to our President-Elect at the North Miami Public Library where Lucia served as Director for many years. Members of Lucia's family, the public, library staff, Friends of the Library, and government dignitaries were regaled with touching tributes to Lucia's dedication and professionalism.



Speakers shared stories about Lucia's tenacity in securing funds to modernize the library, her creativity in its design, her mentoring of the current director, and the many ways she reached out to the community during her tenure. Throughout the ceremony happy shouts of children could be heard as they played on the climbing apparatus, swings, and slides. Beautiful landscaping and benches adorned the area,

adding enjoyment of nature to its many uses.

Lucia thanked well-wishers on REFORMAnet with this note of appreciation:

"Many of you may know I had the unique professional opportunity

Lucia Martinez González Tot Lot (continued)

to become Director of the first library I used when I arrived in the United States in 1970, the North Miami Public Library. I received my first library card there when I was 12 years old and didn't yet know English (las vueltas que da la vida!).



At the inaugural ceremony I felt the spirit of my father, Jose Tomas Martinez, who worked very hard as a gardener in this very city he made our home. In my heart I said, "gracias viejo, aqui planto tu nombre, nuestro nombre, nuestra historia."

I love my North Miami community and the library we envisioned and built together. I served with love, and was empowered and allowed to implement all that I thought a library should be.

I am so proud of the beautiful playground!"

We are also so very proud of you Lucia. Congratulations! (More Tot Lot photos at the end of the newsletter.)

!Que no pare la fiesta! - Don't stop the party! at FLA

by Ximena Valdivia



At the recent FLA 2025 conference, Maria Vega (ReDeFL President), presented a program titled *Que no pare la fiesta - Don't Stop the Party!* The presentation introduced attendees to the *Core List of Graphic Novels for Latinx*, developed by the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table and



REFORMA National. The presentation highlighted diverse identities within the Latinx community, spanning languages, cultures, social statuses, LGBTQIA+ identities, and Indigenous roots, and explained what makes a graphic novel outstanding. Maria was introduced by Ximena Valdivia, member of the FLA Conference Planning Committee.



The session showcased key titles, emphasizing groundbreaking, accessible, and relevant titles for school, public, and academic libraries. Attendees learned how these books have been used in programming during Hispanic Heritage Month and Banned



Books Week at Broward County Library. They also received categorized program ideas with book recommendations. Opportunities for book giveaways and audience questions were part of the fun.

Spanish Publishers and ReDeFL Power Breakfast at FLA

by Lucia M. González



Our standout event was the Spanish Publishers and ReDeFL Power Breakfast on Thursday, May 15. This free breakfast event, sponsored by Spanish Publishers, featured author Julio Bevione who provided everyone with a complimentary copy of his book "Volver a Mi." We are very grateful to Spanish Publishers for their sponsorship. Our REFORMA de Florida Board was well represented, with participation from President Maria Vega and Treasurer Isabel Castro. It was wonderful to see other board members and so many members of ReDeFL in attendance.



Noche de Cuentos at FLA 2025

by Lucia M. González and Alicia K. Long



The 2025 FLA Conference was a tremendous success for REFORMA de Florida. Our message was communicated effectively, and we are thrilled it resonated with everyone.



On Wednesday May 16, REdeFL hosted a panel presentation titled "*Noche de Cuentos: A Family Literacy Initiative Building Community Through the Art of Storytelling.*" Despite being scheduled early in the day as the first program of the conference, we attracted a good-sized audience. This session was a REdeFL team effort as incoming President Lucia M. González joined 2021-2022 President Alicia K. Long as presenters. Our Treasurer, Isabel Castro, introduced REFORMA de Florida to the audience while 2023-2025 President Maria Vega and Freda Mosquera, member, contributed information about *Noche* programs conducted in their libraries.

The early hour didn't discourage attendees who actively participated and were mesmerized by a spontaneous story told by Lucia with a string of yarn, cat cradle's style. In addition to discussing the overall mission and history of this cherished national literacy initiative, we shared resources on programming as attendees wanted to know how to implement a "*Noche de Cuentos*" program, as

Noche de Cuentos at FLA (continued)

well as how to apply for REFORMA National's Mini Grants to help support the initiative in their libraries.

The website nochedecuentos.org, originally created as an American Library Association's Emerging Leaders (EL) project by Alicia K. Long and her EL Team, includes resources for those interested in creating storytelling events. It also includes special art generously shared by artist and author Yuyi Morales, lists of performers to hire, a bibliography, periodic updates about programs nationwide, and information to apply for REFORMA's *Noche Mini Grants*, which REFORMA

National awards each year.

Additionally, also on Wednesday, Lucia participated in a panel discussion titled "*Libraries are for Everyone: Building and Maintaining an Inclusive Collection.*" Overall, the conference was a great success. We hope to continue to have a strong presence at all upcoming FLA conferences. As REFORMistas, we have a responsibility now more than ever to show up, speak up, and advocate for quality, inclusive, and responsive library services to Latinos and the Spanish-speaking community in Florida.

REFORMA NATIONAL
Noche de Cuentos mini grants:
Accepting applications until June 30th

Through **June 30th** REFORMA National is accepting applications for the 2025 *Noche de Cuentos Mini Grants*. Ten mini grants of \$500 each will be awarded to support your library's *Noche de Cuentos* program to take place anytime between September-December 2025.



Noche de Cuentos (A Night of Stories) began in 2010. REFORMA National defines it as "...a REFORMA family literacy initiative...to promote and preserve the art of storytelling within Latino communities in the United States. REFORMA believes storytelling and oral traditions are essential to the transmission and preservation of culture and serve as powerful tools in developing literacy skills."

Our June 2025 newsletter showcased ReDeFL member Freda Mosquera. Freda won a mini grant and hosted a powerful *Noche* program at the Broward County Library Lauderdale Lakes branch.

If you're a member of REFORMA de Florida you're eligible to apply. If you're not yet a member go to REFORMA's website, complete the membership form, and choose REFORMA de Florida as your chapter. Once you've received your confirmation email about your membership, complete the mini grant application and submit it.

We look forward to congratulating members who win, so apply now. Good luck!



Dear Future Librarian

by Gaby Gomez

Dear First-Semester Me...

If I could write a letter to the me who was about to start the MLIS journey I'd say: *take a deep breath, grab a bobba tea, and know your world is about to be cataloged, color-coded, and chaotically magical.*

I remember feeling incredibly nervous, despite graduating summa cum laude in Marketing. The thought of grad school intimidated me. What if I wasn't ready? What if eight years of library experience wasn't enough? Spoiler alert: imposter syndrome is a lying little gremlin, and you are absolutely enough.

Starting at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus I felt something beautiful: representation. Latinx students everywhere, along with Korean and Anglo classmates, filling the halls with dreams and determination. Even in an online format I could sense the strong Latinx presence in our virtual classrooms. It felt like I was part of a vibrant mosaic of voices and perspectives.

Expectations? Oh, I had them. I thought tech class would be easy. I was wrong. My professor, who was writing a book on the medical industry in Puerto Rico, assigned me to contact over 48 companies for data. I aged three years in one semester. But in that chaos, I realized: librarians are investigators, researchers, and detectives in cardigans.

I found love in the most unexpected place: cataloging. At first, it felt like deciphering ancient elvish. Now? It's my passion. I use it daily at work, and it feels like discovering a superpower no one told me I had.

APA? More like A-PAIN. Relearning the rules every semester felt like the academic version of whack-a-mole. But the Pomodoro Technique saved me, perfect for my ADHD brain. {25 minutes of focus, 5 minutes of head banging to *Ghost* [Swedish band] Repeat.)

There were no true moments of wanting to quit, but learning about Dublin Core was a revelation. While others feared it, I embraced it. It confirmed I was where I needed to be.

My biggest academic oops? Helping a student with citations and realizing mid-process I had given them the wrong format. Crisis averted, but librarian heart attack unlocked.

My guiding light? Dr. Mercy Delgado. She said something I'll never forget: "*We must teach people to learn how to learn.*" That phrase clings to me like a post it on a textbook.

To the perfectionist, people-pleasing me of the first semester: *Relax, girl. You're doing great. Celebrate small wins.* I now reward myself with *Hello Kitty* merch and bubble tea every time I survive a semester (which is often). Milton Glaser once said, "*There are three responses to a piece of*

Dear Future Librarian (continued)

design: yes, no, and WOW. Wow is the one to aim for." I aim for WOW in life too, but I'm learning that progress > perfection.

Being a Latina in this field? We are rising, we are loud, we are needed. We are taking up space in academic libraries, public systems, archives, and tech roles, and we're doing it with savor, resilience, and unmatched creativity.

And when did I feel like a real librarian for the first time? Researching legal cases for my summer class. Nothing says "I've arrived" like a full EBSCO deep dive with three tabs, two coffees, and a citation crisis.

If my first semester were a book title, it would definitely be: ***Eternal Confusion: A Memoir in MARC Fields***.

We're still waiting to hear from MLIS students of any semester who want to be interviewed for future columns! If you'd like to be featured, email me at gaby.gomez.26@outlook.com.

Come on, don't make me interview my stuffed animals.

Till next time,
Gaby

!Latineando

by David Hernandez Rivero



Un saludo muy caluroso a todos los Reformistas de Florida. My name is David Hernandez Rivero, and I'm delighted to welcome you to my column "*Latineando*." I like this name because it stresses how proud I am of my identity, native language, and culture. I am the Community Library Manager at Broward County Library, Carver Ranches Branch. Previously I worked at Miami Dade Public Library System as Programming Librarian I.

I worked in college and university libraries in Albuquerque, New Mexico and have experience in museum and archival work. Community building and community engagement have been key concepts and ideas that have driven my library career.

I am originally from Cuba and came to the United States in 1996. Since then, I've had the opportunity to live in numerous states, including Massachusetts, Arizona, New Mexico, New York, and Florida. My education was at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, and the University of South Florida in Tampa.

I am so proud of my Latino-American and Caribbean identity. I'm also proud of having been able to connect so profoundly with the American Southwest and experience another side of Latino identity. In New Mexico I learned to love dramatic landscapes, spicy foods, adobe constructions, and diverse cultural traditions. Professionally, New Mexico gave me the opportunity to work with diverse communities and to help those on the lowest side of the digital divide.

Latineando (continued)

I have been connected to REFORMA since the mid-2000s when I took my first courses in Library Science. I also participated in REFORMA events during the Guadalajara FIL and two

national conferences. I am strongly thankful to REFORMA for giving me support and resources for programs, collections, partnerships, events, etc.

This column will be dedicated to tips and tricks that I've learned in my career. A great deal of my future columns will be dedicated to programming. Most of what I have done on this long journey has been creating programming for multi-cultural audiences including the exhibit of photographic *Babia: Candomblé Culture in Brazil* as well as Latino and Chicano slam poetry celebrating Latino culture, the Afro-Caribbean festival, a celebration of Argentinian literary festival, multi-cultural storytelling, and many others.

I will also sometimes include tips on creating collections for Latino and Spanish speaking patrons and will use those opportunities to tell you about my favorite authors and creators. Interviews and tips from colleagues and friends who have much to share will also be included.

I will conclude with a reminder that June is Caribbean American Heritage Month. It's a great moment to celebrate what the Caribbean has given us all as culture. Let's celebrate with Plena, Salsa, Reggae, and Calypso. Let's also celebrate the numerous great authors that reflect our shared Caribbean identity such as Alejo Carpentier, Junot Díaz, Edwidge Danticat, and Julia Alvarez among others. Let's enjoy new books such as *Prieto Punk's Antología of Afro Futurismo Caribeno* and *Hugo Canuto: Contos dos Orixás* where Orixás from Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian religions become superheroes.

¡¡¡¡Bienvenidos a todos y mucho ache!!!! Welcome everyone.

In the Know: Largo Public Library (Tampa Bay) ELL Program

by Katherine Kelly



On May 2nd, the Largo Public Library celebrated three years of English learner Dina Demazo working with her volunteer tutor Rebecca Baker, a retired judge. Dina enjoyed working with Rebecca every week - riding her bike to the library and to work, even in the hot summer heat. Her goal is to get her driver's license.

Dina recently returned from her first trip home to Peru in more than six years and stories of her home inspired Rebecca to visit Peru along with another long time ELL program volunteer at Largo. Although Rebecca is now working with a new student, she and Dina will remain friends. This is what often happens when the library's English language learning program creates the student/tutor relationship, it blossoms into long-lasting friendships.

The library is continually looking for more individuals willing to volunteer and work with English learners. We take adults from all walks of life and demographics interested in gaining global

Largo Public Library (continued)

cultural insights as well as professional experience. The library seeks patient, caring, flexible adults who have a desire to help others and can commit to a minimum of 6 months/2 hours each week. Currently the Largo Public Library's ELL program has 25 active students and 28 volunteers, The program has been in place since 2008, for 17 years!

If you know of an adult English learner in the Tampa Bay region seeking a tutor, or someone looking for a rewarding volunteer experience, send them our way with an email to ell@largo.com.

Editor's Note: *If you want to contribute to future columns of "In the Know," send me an email and I'll make sure your event is featured in our next newsletter. Are YOU in the know?*

Register for the National REFORMA Conference VIII: September 18-21



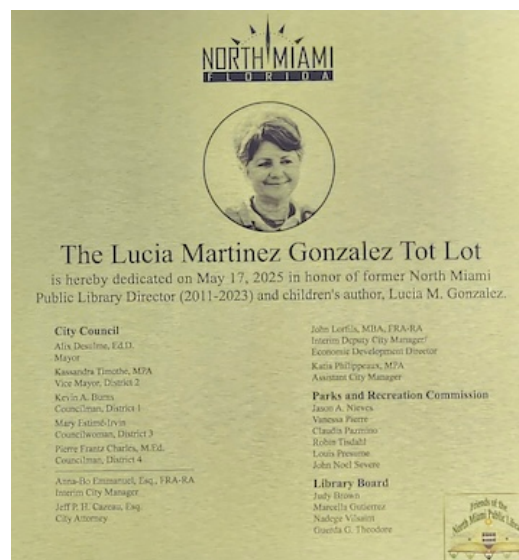
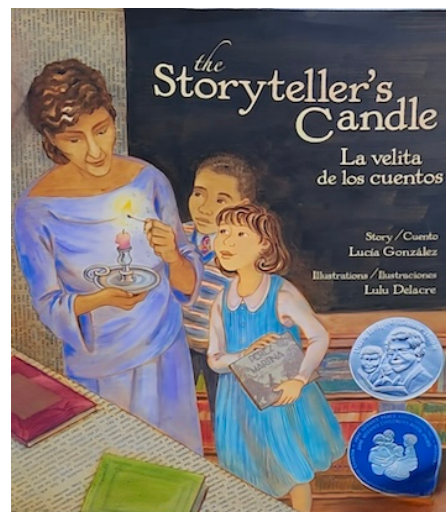
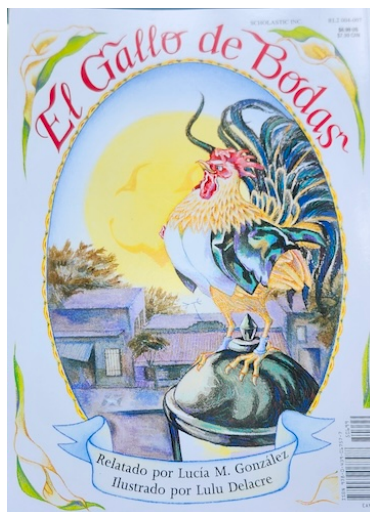
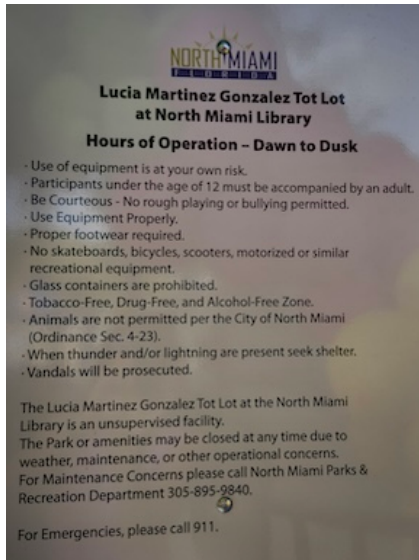
Registration for the National REFORMA Conference VIII is still open. An email about early pricing, which ended May 31st, was sent to all members last month. Advance rates end July 31st, so register as soon as possible because registration rates increase again on August 1st.

The conference will be held September 18-21 in beautiful Long Beach California. Once you [register for the conference](#) you will receive a confirmation link with information on how to register for the host hotel. We hope to see you there!

Lucia Martinez Gónzalez Tot Lot Dedication photos



Tot Lot Dedication photos (continued)



Are you a Corporate member of REFORMA de Florida?

Corporate members are an important part of our chapter. Send a photo, business card, or a short blurb about your company for a future newsletter. We want to know more about you!

What's happening in your region?: (Northern, Central, or Southern)

What's happening in your library or region related to our Latino community? Email us your name, region, title, library name, a short summary of your news or event, and any photos. Your news can grow membership in your region, and for our chapter, so we look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you to Katherine Kelly and the Largo Public Library at Tampa Bay for this month's news update.

Were you forwarded this newsletter but are not yet a member of REFORMA de Florida?

To join or renew, go to REFORMA National's Membership page and make sure to check REFORMA de Florida as your chapter.



***Is your membership getting ready to expire?
Are you a Member-at-large?***

Not sure if your membership is expiring? Email me to learn your status.

If you're a REFORMA National **Member-at-large** (not associated with ReDeFL or any chapter), email me for information on **how to join the Florida chapter** as a full member.