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**ESPERANZA CELEBRATES RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY OF THE TEATRO ESPERANZA**

**The theater for performing arts, media and technology is one of Esperanza Arts Center’s assets for Latino arts and culture in the heart of Hunting Park.**

**Philadelphia, PA – December 12, 2018:**Esperanza celebrated the opening of the completed Teatro Esperanza (Esperanza Theater) with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, December 11, 2018. Teatro Esperanza, part of the [Esperanza Arts Center](http://www.esperanza.us/arts-center/) (EAC) will be the center for Latino arts and culture in the Philadelphia region, and will feature a broad spectrum of traditions from around the world – presenting cultural experiences of the highest caliber, and providing a space for the community to gather, to express themselves, and to be positively transformed through the arts.

The opening of Teatro Esperanza represents another step towards transforming Hunting Park into an Opportunity Community, a neighborhood where individuals and families thrive, have access to great jobs, quality schools, safe streets, rich cultural life experiences, affordable homes, and vibrant local businesses.

“Arts and culture make considerable and necessary contributions to the well-being of a community as they are powerful tools with which to engage neighborhoods in various levels of change,” said Tina Barber, Esperanza VP of Development.

Through discussions with residents and community members, Esperanza has ensured those who will call the Esperanza Arts Center their cultural home will have played an integral role in its programming.

“This is ‘Ours’ with a capital ‘O’. Shaped and informed by input from our constituents, Esperanza Arts Center will truly become a forum of, by, and for our Hunting Park community,” said Bill Rhoads, SVP of the Esperanza Arts Center.

Esperanza is incredibly grateful for the investments of the Connelly Foundation, Comcast Corporation, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania - that, together, made the construction of the Teatro Esperanza possible.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony included remarks by Mayor Jim Kenney, Tim Durkin, COO of the Connelly Foundation; Robert Murkin, Comcast Sr. Director of Government Affairs; Nedia Ralston, Southeast Regional Director for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and the Rev. Luis Cortés Jr., Founder, President and CEO of Esperanza.

Artistas y Músicos Latinoamericanos (AMLA), the Dali String Quartet, and the Esperanza Academy Dance Ensemble offered previews of Teatro Esperanza’s upcoming Winter/Spring season.

For more information, contact Joy Huertas at (215) 324-0746 ext. 480 or jhuertas@esperanza.us

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**About Esperanza**. Esperanza is a national community-based social benefit organization founded in 1986 by Rev. Luis Cortés Jr., and the Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity with the biblical mandate to serve and advocate for "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40). Beginning with a local initiative, with programs targeted to address the unmet needs of North Philadelphia's Hispanic community, Rev. Cortés is now sought by national and international leaders alike on issues of economic and workforce development, housing, immigration, and education. Under his leadership, Esperanza has grown from a small operation to a $40 million organization with more than 450 employees. Visit [www.esperanza.us](http://www.esperanza.us) or follow us on social media @esperanza\_us on Twitter and Instagram, EsperanzaUSA on Facebook and Esperanza US on YouTube.

**About Esperanza Arts Center (EAC).** Guided by Esperanza’s core values of faith, integrity, and excellence, EAC is the hub for Latino performing arts in the Philadelphia region, spotlighting the rich spectrum of traditions from Central and South America and the Caribbean, as well as other cultures from around the world, creating positive transformational experiences for students, families, and attendees of all ages through the arts. For more information visit [www.esperanzaartscenter.us](http://www.esperanzaartscenter.us)

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