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Fearless Friday: Venissa Ledesma

Venissa Ledesma
Gettysburg College

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Fearless Friday: Venissa Ledesma

Abstract

This week we are celebrating the work of Venissa Ledesma '19. Venissa is a sophomore at Gettysburg College from San Diego, California. She is an Environmental Studies major and a Peace and Justice Studies minor. Currently, Venissa is the president of the Latin American Student Association (LASA), a Program Coordinator for Immersion Projects at the Center for Public Service (CPS), a tour guide for prospective students, and a Day Host Ambassador for the Admissions office.

[excerpt]

Keywords

Fearless Friday, California, environmental science, Gettysburg College, Latin American Student Association, leadership, Mexican American, San Diego, women leaders, Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Center for Public Service

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://www.gettysburg.edu/) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS FRIDAY: VENISSA LEDESMA

December 9, 2016



This week we are celebrating the work of Venissa Ledesma '19. Venissa is a sophomore at Gettysburg College from San Diego, California. She is an Environmental Studies major and a Peace and Justice Studies minor. Currently, Venissa is the president of the Latin American Student Association (LASA), a Program Coordinator for Immersion Projects at the Center for Public Service (CPS), a tour guide for prospective students, and a Day Host Ambassador for the Admissions office.

Venissa first became involved in campus activities, particularly LASA, as a first year student. LASA was a safe place for her to express her opinions and concerns. She quickly became unapologetic in her beliefs and started attending eRace, a weekly dialogue group focused on race, which also helped her to discover her

voice. Venissa was inspired, too, by a CPS Immersion trip that she went on to Nicaragua, which was centered on the interplay of environmental sustainability and social justice.

Venissa is motivated by her identity as a second generation Mexican-American, which she feels gives her the passion as well as the responsibility to affect change. Her grandfather inspired her to create a world where minorities are no longer treated like “others.” His endurance and strength continue to motivate her every day. While growing up in a diverse environment in California, Venissa never felt like an “other;” but in coming to Gettysburg College, a predominantly white institution, she began to feel the weight of that label. But she used the feeling of being an outsider to fuel her desire to make change, most importantly by making her voice heard at eRace, taking on leadership roles, and challenging her classmates’ sometimes ignorant statements instead of letting them go unquestioned.

It is Venissa’s hope that, through her work, she can empower people who might be viewed as “others” to be able to say: “I am here. I will not be silent.” She credits members of BSU and LASA from the Class of 2016 and their work on the “We Are Gettysburg Too” campaign for empowering her to do this and inspiring her to motivate others to do the same. Venissa isn’t exactly sure of her future plans yet, but wants to combine her passion for

sustainable development with her passion for social justice. She hopes to travel the world and continue to learn, grow, and affect change.

We wish you the best of luck, Venissa, and know you will do great work!

<https://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2016/12/09/fearless-friday-venissa-ledesma/>