

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH THROUGH THE LENS OF BMC LATINE ERG MEMBERS



September 15<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup> is the annual celebration of [Hispanic Heritage Month](#), which recognizes and honors the [LatinE](#) community's contributions, diverse cultures, and extensive histories. At BMC, many of our LatinE employees are members of the LatinE [employee resource group](#) (ERG), one of 10 ERGs at BMC. For Hispanic Heritage Month, we asked members what the month means to them and how their heritage has informed their experiences.

For [Fernando Guerrero](#), Legal Counsel for Mexico and North LATAM at BMC, it has been crucial to identify himself as a Latino. "I have fallen in love with LATAM after realizing all the countries, all the people with whom I can form bonds based on that," he shares. "I understand and appreciate the differences between those of us who were born and live in LATAM and those who were born elsewhere but have Latin ancestry. The experience is not the same."

He adds that finding the BMC LatinE ERG was extremely beneficial. "I live the Hispanic Heritage experience 24/7, and it's an honor to show it to the company I work for. This group helped me fall in love with BMC. I joined the company in the middle of the pandemic and my manager left two months after she hired me, so I started socializing with people from all over the world through this ERG," he explains. "It was my balance in the storm, when there was no other way to meet people."

[Jennifer Drai](#), an IS&T Senior Project Manager at BMC, credits her Hispanic heritage for helping her define her personal and professional identity. "I have deep appreciation for family moments and bonds, the love of community and support, and the hard-working spirit and passion that defines us," she says.

"To better appreciate the Hispanic culture, it is important for our future generations to learn about

the history behind every country, their contributions to the world, and all the struggles they've experienced and continue to in order to remain the independent and prosperous nations that they are today."

"Hispanic/LatinE cultures have, and continue to provide, a myriad of positive contributions to our world from our Mayan, Inca, and Aztec ancestors to our latest heroes, artists, engineers, and influencers that continue to make positive impacts worldwide. BMC's LatinE ERG has made me feel like there is a little piece of home and family at work. Every time I get to chat and connect with our fellow members, it feels like we already know each other."

[Eric Olmo](#), Senior VP of People and Spaces at BMC, has a personal experience as an immigrant, arriving in the United States at the age of four. "This has gifted me with the ability to observe being an American from a broader point of view and has made me proud to identify as both an American and a member of the LatinE community. Through my background, I have developed a sense of affinity and understanding of those who have also immigrated to the United States," he explains.

Olmo says his mother was integral to helping him retain his heritage. "She was very intentional in making sure that I did not lose my native language and tie to the motherland," he says. "The benefits of being bilingual are invaluable cognitively, as well as providing that central connection to cultural heritage. It also helps me stay connected with my culture and with my family abroad. Maintaining a lifetime strong bond with family is very important to me."

[Natalie Díaz Paldanius](#), a Communications Consultant at BMC, was raised in the United States and spent her childhood summers visiting Mexico. "I am very proud of my Mexican background. I am lucky that I grew up going to Mexico almost every summer to reconnect with family members and explore the different regions of a place that means so much to me," she explains.

"Like many other cultures, the LatinE culture is a genuinely selfless and warm community to all. They always put others first. We are all about connection and supporting one another, whether we have known you for years or just met you yesterday, which is something I'll never take for granted."

"From my passion for building relationships, to my strong work ethic, every aspect of my personality has to do with the culture I was raised in. I believe it is important to be intentional about learning about all cultures, but most especially the culture that you identify with. There is so much richness and depth that the LatinE culture has to offer."

"It is also important to know about the struggles the LatinE cultures have overcome or still face today. With this knowledge, you can become an informed advocate for your community and help make positive change for future generations through small and big actions."

We hope you'll join BMC in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month as we support these global organizations.

- [LGBTI Social Alliance of Antioquia](#) is a youth, social, and community-based organization that promotes actions and develops strategies aimed at the recognition of diversity as a common heritage of humanity.
- [AFESU](#) in Brazil promotes human dignity through the citizen, educational, and professional formation of socially vulnerable women from childhood to adulthood.
- [Gerando Falcoes](#) is an organization dedicated to transforming the lives of children, young people, leaders, and favela residents through education and access to work and technologies in Brazil.

- [Tarjimly](#) is a crowdsourced translation app staffed by volunteer translators. Our blog post on the organization is [here](#).
- [Nutre a un Nino](#) is a non-profit working with poor rural communities in Mexico to foster social, economic, and environmental development in favor of child nutrition.
- [HeForShe](#) is a global non-profit mobilizing for gender equality.