

On May 2, 2024, friends, family and community partners unveiled the "Life of Activism" Mural at the MAAC Project Community Room where it will be permanently displayed. This mural is a tribute to R. Daniel Hernández and it honors his life of activism, service and leadership that helped advance communities of color in San Diego and the Imperial Valley. Danny was an outstanding man who believed that all things were possible by advocating and bringing people together. He believed firmly that one person can make a difference and in the movimiento which sought to even the playing field for all. Danny was the consummate Chicano who used all his talents for good and never forgot his humble roots. Even though he is gone, with this mural his life legacy of activism, service and leadership will continue to inspire.

The beautiful 10 ft x 8 ft. mural created by best-friend and muralist, Roberto R. Pozos, is a wonderful depiction of Danny's Life of Activism, Service and Leadership. It takes us on a visual journey from Danny's early years in Imperial Valley to his professional life in San Diego and includes some of the people, things, and organizations that made Danny one of San Diego's most beloved leaders, mentor, amigo, role model and carnal. While there are hundreds of individuals that Danny touched and were touched by him, the faces represented in this mural are representative of ALL the community.



MAAC Community Center
1387 Third Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91902



Danny's Early Years

Danny was born and raised in Brawley, California. Brawley is a vast agricultural border community that is overseen by the Mount Signal or to locals "El Centinela", a majestic peak that guides people on both sides of the border through the desert. It serves as a spectacular backdrop to the luscious irrigated fields and their backbreaking farm labor.



Danny was the son of Pilar and Manuel Hernández and was the youngest of three children. Since older brother and fellow activist, Francisco, left for UC Berkeley and the Peace Corps, and sister Rosa left for Los Angeles to raise her family, Danny was raised like an only child. His activist parents brought him along to all their American Citizen Club (ACC) meetings and at an early age he was exposed to door-to-door campaigning, fundraising and electing candidates that were supportive of Chicano issues. One of Danny's early memories and proudest moments was campaigning for Cruz Reynoso, the first Latino State of California Supreme Court Judge. Danny learned early in life that by registering people their vote became their voice and that by organizing you could create positive change.



Danny was born into a farmworkers family and worked in the fields to help his family make a better life for themselves. He experienced hard work, limited rights and lack of benefits the poor experienced. He recognized how important education was to change those conditions and was an advocate for education. These experiences influenced his advocacy work not only in college but throughout his entire life. Danny was a longtime supporter both in action and with money for farmworker rights and proudly wore the UFW pin throughout his career.

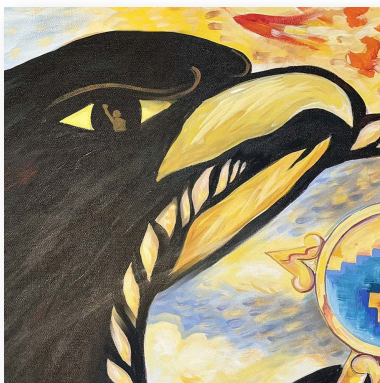
Danny's M.E.Ch.A. Years

Danny attended Imperial Valley College (IVC). The admissions building with its rose garden walkway proved to be his entry into the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (M.E.Ch.A.) where he organized various student and farmworker rallies, marches, protests and other activities to empower Chicano students and promote higher education. He was a gifted communicator with deep knowledge and a never give up attitude that became the cornerstone of his career in marketing, public relations, and community advocacy. On April 24, 2023, Roberto R. Pozos dedicated a 60 ft. mural in the IVC library to his dear friend, Daniel, and the students of IVC.



Danny relocated to San Diego from the Imperial Valley and attended San Diego State University (SDSU) where he continued to be active in M.E.Ch.A. and served as Chair. He welcomed students to High School Conferences held yearly by student groups and always stressed the importance of leadership, self-determination and education. Themes he continued stressing throughout his life. He was fearless and as recounted in the book "We Made San Diego" by Maria Garcia, Danny led a caravan of fourteen cars of SDSU Mechistas to bring food to farmworkers in the Imperial Valley. They heard shots as they were delivering the food and witnessed the shooting of Rufino Contreras, a 28-year old farmworker who was shot and killed by one of the grower's armed foremen. Danny and the Mechistas did not relent and continued fighting for their culture and identity. At SDSU he led the effort to prevent the university from "whitewashing" the murals in the Aztec Center by organizing the students and developing a plan that included clergy and media coverage to bring attention to the murals. This quick thinking saved the murals which today continue to inspire students.





Danny's Professional Years

As a student at SDSU he worked in the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) office under Gus Chavez, EOP Director. He assisted EOP newsletter editor, Julie Rocha, and used his writing talents. People recognized Danny's leadership qualities and organizing skills to help students graduate and succeed academically. He assisted in many state and national conferences to make sure Latinos were in higher education. The EOP office, exposed him to key community leaders who he considered mentors and who are among the many colleagues and friends featured on the mural. They included Jess Haro, Irma Castro, Jim Estrada, Carlos and Linda LeGerrette, Rosalia Salinas, David Valladolid, Roger Cazares, Mária E. García and Nick and Connie Hernandez.



Danny embraced his self-determination and loved being a Chicano. One of his early jobs was at the Chicano Federation where he worked for many years. Even when not working directly as staff, he helped as a volunteer or any way he could. He said that he "cut his teeth" on the politics in the Chicano Federation through the Federation's advocacy for employment, gender discrimination, voting rights, bilingual education, economic development, housing, social and senior services and immigration." He was creative and was a founding member of the Chicano Federation's LTI – Leadership Training Institute, which ran for many years creating leaders throughout San Diego. The LTI recently has been reignited to inspire younger generations to follow leadership roles in the community as many who previously graduated.



Danny was one with the community, working, supporting and volunteering with many organizations and businesses. The logos featured in the mural represent a small portion of those influential organizations. Each of them, Danny held in high esteem and respect. In some, he served as a Founding Member, Executive Director, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, and in others as a strong volunteer, board member, and supporter. His affinity for understanding the community helped many organizations reach their audience. He created festivals and events of all types, as well as helping the community through his knowledge of the healthcare industry. As a healthcare advocate, he used all of his skills to the fullest serving as the marketing, fundraising, and outreach expert. He made sure that everything he worked on was successful, regardless of whether he was volunteering or working for a salary.

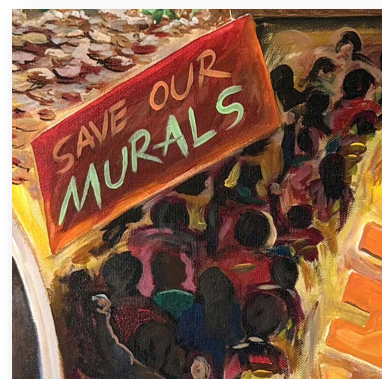


Symbolism and Artistic Elements in the Activism Mural

The **large fist** symbolizes power and solidarity. Danny would lift his fist in the air as a display of Chicano Power and lead the **Chicano Clap** everywhere he went. He would stop everyone with his loud voice, calling for attention.

The **M.E.Ch.A. eagle** is immense and black clenching the mecha (fuse) in his mouth, which is inflamed and becomes part of the eagle warrior headdress. The MEChA logo represents the fighting spirit that Danny embodied.

The **guerreño águila** (eagle warrior) looks toward the **horizon** and the **brown eagle soars** into the sky representing the warrior that Danny was setting his sights up high. The eagle warrior and the brown eagle look **towards the sun** and feel its rays of energy as Danny would do.





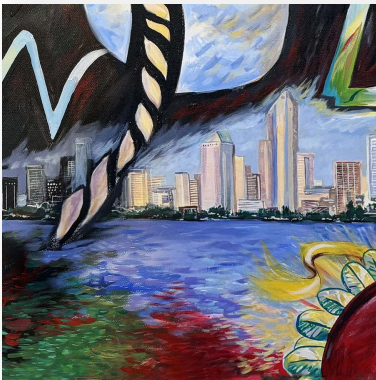
The **sun rays** give light and energy as Danny did to many others



The **horizon colors** cross with blues and clouds as we see the radiant **San Diego** skyline representing his city. The place where his heart was. You see his community with the **sagrado corazón** (sacred heart) ignited.

The **voting box** is sitting on the dirt with a **hand casting a ballot**. It is sitting on the dirt right next to the **fields** to symbolize the connection between voting and the uplifting of our gente.

The M.E.Ch.A. eagle embraces the mural. Its **wings** are spread diagonally across the entire mural, embodying Danny's activism spirit embracing everyone.



The **medical symbol** represents his commitment to making high quality, equitable, ethical healthcare accessible to all.

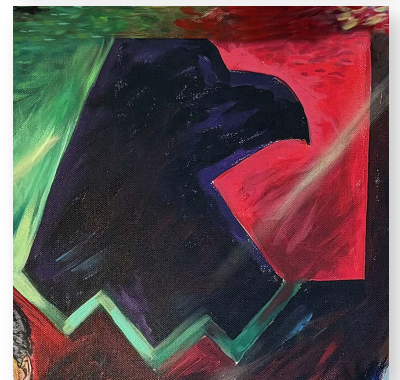
Danny loved the **ocean and beaches**! He lived in all of the beach communities in San Diego and would travel to his beloved Kauai every year. He took many friends/guests with him. He loved introducing people to Kauai!

The wings are **embracing** this mural. They are in the MEChA eagle, the brown eagle, the medical symbol, and in the **UFW** symbol.

Behind **Guz Chavez** you see **pyramids** that are throughout the continent in Mesoamerica. They serve as a link between Danny's Mexican heritage and his **SDSU** Aztec pride.

The **Chicano Clap** is only used when necessary and always with pride. Danny would often lead the Chicano Clap to demonstrate appreciation for someone or to underscore the importance of a moment.

Dialogue - Communication is shown with two **people shaking hands**, male and female, with the **symbols of speech** and communication between them. A woman is looking at them and **learning**. Danny was a consummate communicator. He knew how to bring people together and to learn from each other.

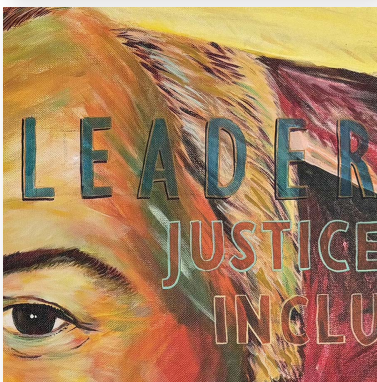




Two large, **shaking hands**, agreeing and compromising for a better good. They lead to a better good for everyone and are surrounded by the words, "**Viva la Raza.**"

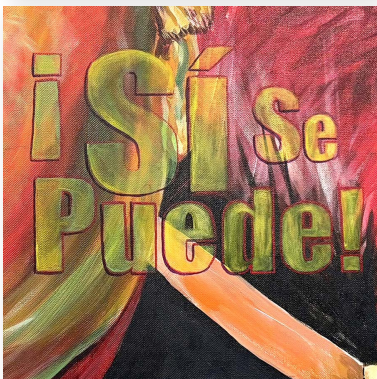


Danny had palabra and sometimes it was as simple as a word and a hand shake. You could count on Danny to be there. Danny with his white shirt, with his hand up in **Chicano Power**, with **Cesar Chavez** and **Dolores Huerta** on his left shoulder. Danny embraced their example of organizing, boycotting, and taking on difficult or challenging problems as he would often do to help the organizations he worked for.



The eagle of the farmworker is **red** on one side and green on the other for the Mexican flag. Its wings expand next to the Sagrado Corazón. The ribbon crossing the Sagrado Corazón with a short **quote** from a speech he gave in Barrio Logan on June 25, 2022. They are powerful words with a special message to the community.

The word **leadership** represents Danny's personality. He was a natural leader who believed in **justice** and **inclusion** and optimism. As he often said and believed, "**¡Sí Se Puede!**"



There are four instrumental **books to a life of activism**, starting with Book 1: Self-determination, Book 2: Advocacy * Support, Book 3: Service * Volunteer * Donate, and Book 4: Chicano Studies * History * Cultura. These books are to the right of the stylized reading **Chacmool bookstand** to encourage everyone to read, get educated, learn and then take action!

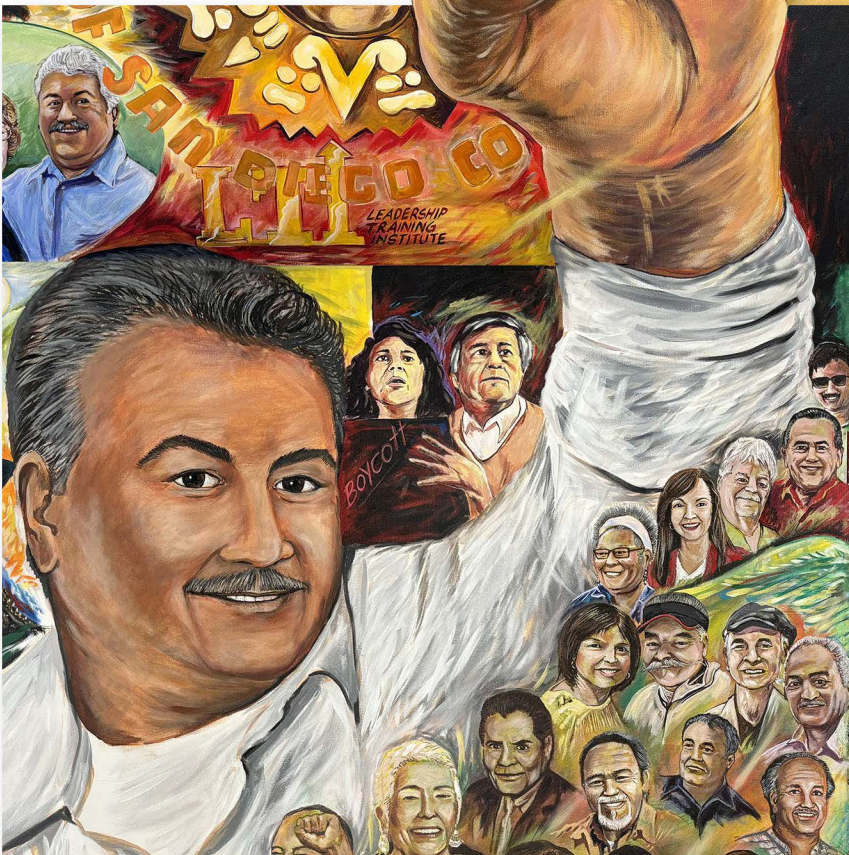
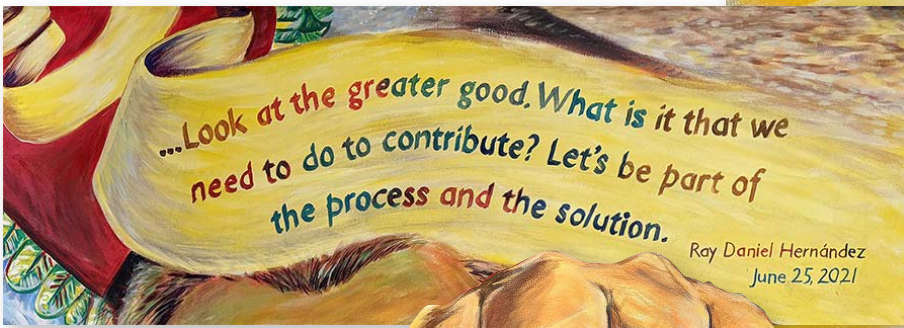


The **colors throughout the mural are vibrant and colorful**. This is because everyone brings their own hue and voice to the community just as Danny did. The colors mean that everyone is in this together and that activism is important to us all. As the **sun rays** cross the mural, they brighten everything just as Danny lit our lives. The community will stay active in participating and being **part of the process and the solution...** "Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mi."

The Community

The community is all of us. The community is large since so many were touched by Danny. The people depicted in the "Life of Activism" Mural represent all of us because we are all impacted by activism and we are all activist in some way.





Words from the artist/muralist, Roberto R. Pozos

Danny was a big part of my life for over 40 years. I met him through his brother, Francisco. Francisco worked as a silkscreen and photography teacher at Callexico Neighborhood House where I would hang out when I was 12 years old. Francisco believed in me and gave me my first drawing job. It was there that I met Danny. He was 17 years old and throughout the years was the same Danny I became friends with as youngsters. We called each other carnales (brothers) from the day we met. We went on to IVC and SDSU together, then became roommates, associates and business partners. Danny supported my artistic career by working with me and helping me get fine art commissions, and graphic design, print, event, and art direction projects. As one of his many best friends, I was motivated to make this mural a reality because he was someone special that needed to live on. I miss my carnal, Danny, Dan the Man always. RIP brother.

Below is a listing of all the people pictured in the mural in no particular order. Names with bullet point are members of the RDH Activism Mural Project Committee.

Nellie Andrade
Gloria Casillas •
 Irma Castro
 Memo Cavada +
 Roger & Norma Cazares
 Gus Chavez +
Norma Colunga •
 Guadalupe Corona
 Tom Dubose
 Jim Estrada
 Joann Fields
Adela Garcia •
Mária E. García •
 Leah Goodwin
 Jess Haro
Connie & Nick Hernandez •
 Marcella Hernandez (niece)
Leticia Ibarra •
 Juan Laguna
 Christine Rosa Maestas (sister)
 Arnulfo Manriquez
 Venus Molina
 Blanca Morales
 Diane Moss
Barbara Orozco-Valdivia •
 Tito Portillo +
Roberto R. Pozos •
 Cipriano R. Pozos
Manuel Ramirez •
 Joy Reina
 Liliana Rivera
 David Rodriguez
 Steve Lopez & Maria Rubio
 Rosalia Salinas
 Ramon 'Chunky' Sanchez
Carmen & Jesse Sandoval •
Greg Sandoval •
 David Sawicki
 David & Teresa Valladolid
 Eloy Villa
Alfredo Ibarra •



R. DANIEL HERNANDEZ'
A Life of **ACTIVISM**
MURAL



VISUALLY COMMUNICATING SINCE 1985