



The Aurora Public Library presents our 5<sup>th</sup> annual Ofrendas Competition, and you are invited to participate! Local organizations, families, and community members are signing up to decorate an altar in the Santori Library Atrium to honor deceased relatives and welcome the spirits to All Saints Day on November 1 and All Souls Day on November 2. Deadline to participate is October 1 and spots are going fast!

Each ofrenda will include a representative of the four elements of life, including water, air, earth, and fire. Cempasúchil, or marigold flower, is the traditional flower of Muertos, and is believed to guide the dead to their offerings with its unique and delightful aroma. This earth element joins representations of food, particularly fruits, that the relative enjoyed in life. Likewise, it is common to include a commemoration to the relative's favored beverage as an earth offering.

Air elements include papel picado, or paper banners, to decorate each altar and add vibrant colors to this joyful celebration. A glass of water is typically included, and is believed to quench the thirst of loved ones traveling from the dead to visit. Finally, candles are displayed to represent the fire elements and memories that are forever "burning in our hearts."

If you are interested in joining the festivities by decorating an ofrenda, please contact Krista Danis at [kdanis@aurorapubliclibrary.org](mailto:kdanis@aurorapubliclibrary.org) for an application as soon as possible. Spots are going fast! Applications are due by October 1, and inventory lists of all included items should be submitted to the library by October 16 for review prior to display in the Atrium.

The winning first, second, and third place ofrendas will be decided by a panel of select community members and will be announced on November 1 at Santori Library during First Fridays festivities. Criteria for judging include the use of colors, originality, creativity, and cultural relevance, or how closely the Ofrenda follows traditional guidelines. The ceremony starts at 5 p.m. and the all ages celebration continues throughout the evening with refreshments, Lotería, crafts, and entertainment. This is a family friendly celebration of Día De Los Muertos!

Krista Danis, Events and Program Coordinator, says "This community event is such an important piece of the collective Día De Los Muertos experience and festival in Aurora. We at the Aurora Public Library are thrilled and honored to host these beautifully crafted altars. Keeping our space for this celebration speaks directly to the role we play in bringing people together to discover, create, connect, and succeed!"

Don't worry, though! If you are unable to attend the First Fridays festivities, the ofrendas will be on display from Monday October 28 through Saturday, November 2, 2019. There are plenty of opportunities to experience this tradition throughout the week!

Do you have significant experience decorating and dedicating ofrendas? If you do, and you would like to participate this year as a judge, let us know! Contact [kdanis@aurorapubliclibrary.org](mailto:kdanis@aurorapubliclibrary.org) for more information.

