



Mano a Mano column for the November 15, 2009 issue of the *VIEWS*  
By David Quinto-Pozos  
Date: November 15, 2009

In the last issue of the *VIEWS*, the RID readership learned about Mano a Mano's recent conference, a transition in the leadership, and the President's future goals for the organization. However, no objectives can be met and goals achieved without a committed group of talented individuals to provide the expertise and dedication to do the work. In this issue of *VIEWS*, I would like to introduce those individuals to you. What follows is a snapshot of the diversity and talent of the Mano a Mano Board. I hope that you will reach out to these individuals and become involved with advancing the profession for interpreters who work in Spanish-influenced settings.

The following three individuals comprise the remainder of Mano a Mano's Executive Board:

Yolanda Chavira is our organization's Vice-President. She was born in Chihuahua, Mexico and moved to New Mexico as a youngster. She has twin sons who are deaf and that got her started on the path to becoming an interpreter. Yolanda graduated from the ITP at El Paso Community College. She now lives in Austin, Texas, where she has worked at the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DARS/DHHS) for the past 13 years. Yolanda is a BEI Level III interpreter and an active trilingual interpreter. She was also one of the content experts for the development of a Texas Trilingual Certification test, developed in partnership with the University of Arizona's National Center on Interpretation, that will be rolled out in 2010. She is also instrumental in organizing and directing the annual trilingual training that is hosted by Texas DARS/DHHS and held in Big Spring, Texas. Yolanda can be reached at: [treasu](mailto:treasu)

Jorge Santiago O'Neill is Mano a Mano's incoming Secretary. His two last names are taken from those of his parents (Santiago reflects his paternal lineage whereas O'Neill was his mother's maiden name). He was born in Arizona but raised, since 4 months of age, in Puerto Rico. Jorge studied cultural tourism at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, where he also studied French and ASL. His signed language skills improved steadily until he began to work as a Trilingual VRS interpreter. Jorge sees trilingual interpreting as a specialized skill—much like legal, medical, or mental health interpreting, and he is hoping to make an impact on the field through his involvement in Mano a Mano. Jorge is also very involved in PRRID (Puerto Rico Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf).

Another new face to Mano a Mano's Board is Nydia Hernandez, our Treasurer. Nydia was born in Puerto Rico, and at the tender age of three she and her family moved to New York. That's where she was exposed to her Deaf cousin (at age 8) and began her journey into the Deaf world and trilingual language use—a journey that has continued for 17 years. Nydia graduated from LaGuardia Interpreter Training Program in 2001 and now lives in New Jersey. During her affiliation with LaGuardia's program, Nydia was able to travel to Puerto Rico for workshops and various training opportunities related to interpreting.

The Executive Board is supported by various Board representatives. We mirror RID's structure by having a Board representative from each of the five RID regions. The representatives are: Eloy Carrera de los Santos (Region I), Carmelo Falu (Region II), Melva Flores (Region III), Julie Razuri (Region IV), and Arlene Narváez (Region V). The Board is rounded out by two Members at Large (José Bertrán and Ricardo Ortiz), a Chair of the Membership Committee (Tanya Lee Velasquez), a Chair of the Translation Committee (Saúl Arteaga), and a Chair of the International Committee (Angela Roth).

Eloy Carrera de los Santos, Mano a Mano's Region I Representative, is a second generation Cuban, and he is currently the Coordinator of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student Services at George Mason University. He is from Ybor City which was a predominately Cuban barrio of Tampa Bay, Florida. Eloy is married to a Deaf woman and has a foster son who is Deaf. Both of Eloy's hearing daughters are interpreters for the Deaf.

Carmelo Falu, also from Puerto Rico, is Mano a Mano's Region II Representative. Carmelo began to learn ASL at the tender age of 13. He is currently engaged in university studies in pursuit of a Bachelors degree in Pedagogy. Additionally, he has shown commitment to other interpreting organizations by serving as Secretary for PRRID. Carmelo has worked for a non-profit organization known in Puerto Rico as SOS (*Servicios Orientados al Sordo* 'Services designed for the Deaf person'), and he interprets in a myriad of settings including educational, court, conferences, and medical.

Melva Flores, our Region III Representative, is also Puerto Rican, but she was born and raised in Chicago. As is the case with several of our members, her first language was Spanish although she was educated in English. She received a BA degree from the Interpreter Training Program at Columbia College in Chicago and has been regularly involved with the Deaf Latino community in that city, such as being a member of IDLA (Illinois Deaf Latino Association). Melva has been working as a Trilingual Interpreter for over 11 years.

Julie Razuri is Mano a Mano's Region IV Representative. She was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas and considers herself a first generation American. Although, her heritage is both Mexican and Peruvian. Julie graduated from the Interpreter Training Program at San Antonio College (SAC), and she also holds a B.A. from Texas State University. In 1999, she conducted an internship for her B.A. degree, which required a project that allowed her to combine her major of Interpreting and her minor of Latino

Studies. She partnered with her ITP at SAC and worked on the development of the Trilingual Enhanced Certificate program, which was established the following year. For the past 6 years, she has served as full time faculty for the Department of ASL and Interpreter Training at SAC and has taught the Trilingual Enhanced Certificate classes. She also works part-time for Sorenson Communications as a trilingual interpreter.

Arlene Narváez is the Region V Representative. She has been interpreting for 10 years in the Los Angeles, CA area, and she holds RID CI and CT. She is currently pursuing a degree in finance at California State University Northridge. Her trilingual interpreting experience includes both VRS and community work. And, Arlene helped to develop the SCRID Trilingual Committee, of which she is currently the co-chair. This committee hosts a yahoo group, a trilingual blog, trilingual gatherings and tries to create trilingual awareness in the community. She has also served as a presenter for several trilingual trainings and workshops—both at the regional and national levels.

The Mano a Mano Membership Committee Chair is Tanya Lee Velázquez; she is also the only Deaf member of the Board. Tanya was born Deaf, and she was raised in both New York and Puerto Rico. In 2007, she graduated from Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico with the B.A. degree in Business Administration. In the same year she began her employment at ASL Services Latino, Inc in Puerto Rico, where she is currently the call center manager and a mentor for Gracias VRS.

José Bertrán Ortega holds the position of one of two Board Members at Large. He has worked with the Deaf community in Puerto Rico for 24 years, 18 of which were dedicated to serving the community as a Psychologist specializing in Deafness. José has been a leader with various organizations within the Deaf community over the years, and he has been instrumental in the development of programs that have served those wishing to acquire ASL on the island of Puerto Rico. José has been an advocate for Deaf causes with regard to legislative and gubernatorial branches of government, from which services such as the interpretation of the evening news and a weekly show entitled “*ABC en Senas*” (ABC through signs) have been broadcasted by multiple television stations.

Ricardo Ortiz, Mano a Mano’s other Member at Large, is also from Puerto Rico. He lived in the island until the age of 17, after which he moved to the continental United States for a time. Ricardo’s first language is Spanish, but he acquired English in educational settings throughout his childhood and at the university. He studied biology at the Resinto Universitario de Mayagüez de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. In 1999 Ricardo began to learn ASL through a non-profit organization known in Puerto Rico as SOS (*Servicios Orientados al Sordo* ‘Services designed for the Deaf person’). That is where he acquired his ASL skills and later began to work for ASL Services/HOVRs where he is one of the trainers and among the administrative staff. Ricardo has also served, for the past two years, as President of PRRID.

The Chair of the Translation Committee for Mano a Mano is Saúl Arteaga. Saúl was born and raised in Lima, Peru, and he immigrated to the United States at the age of 19. He landed in a small Mid-western town northwest of Chicago, and that is where he met

his bride to be. His first work as a Spanish-English interpreter was to be found in Wisconsin, and he has continued that line of work for the past 10 years. Saúl has a degree in Spanish and he continues his M.A. studies in translation studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has also taken classes in ASL, and he has incorporated signed language interpretation as one of the options in his business that employs interpreters and provides translation and interpretation services to the Wisconsin area. He has been a member of Mano a Mano for more than six years.

Angela Roth, past President of Mano a Mano and current Chair of the International Committee, was born in New York City to Puerto Rican parents. She was introduced to ASL during her time in living in Aurora, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. And, she honed her skills and became nationally certified before moving to Florida. She is the President/CEO and founder of American Sign Language Services, American Sign Language Services Latino (based in Puerto Rico), and Gracias VRS. All three companies provide trilingual interpreting services. Additionally, Angela was instrumental in the formation of Mano a Mano as a non-profit organization, and she has been a leader in the organization since the first conference held in 1999 in Boston, and she has seen the organization through five biennial conferences since that time. She is also a Chair of the newly formed RID Diversity Committee.

What a diverse group of professionals Mano a Mano has as its governing Board! It is clear that these individuals have much expertise and talent. The organization has representation from all over the country, different cultural traditions (including hearing, Deaf, English-speaking, and Spanish-speaking), and a myriad of spoken and signed language dialects. This will surely add to the richness of the organization. I hope that this brief introduction to Mano a Mano's new Board of Directors will provide each of you with the comfort to approach these individuals (see each Board Member's email address at our website: [www.manoamano-unidos.org](http://www.manoamano-unidos.org)) and work with them. With the support of our membership, I am confident that we will accomplish much in the future!