



Summer 2021

Dear Community Member,

We are excited to invite you to create an altar for San Rafael's 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Día de los Muertos celebration, known in English as the Day of the Dead. Although returning to our traditional one-day event this year on Saturday, November 6 at the Albert J. Boro Community Center, the Organizing Committee will also be incorporating several of the new features we were forced to implement last year due to COVID in order to provide an expanded community celebration.

The Día de los Muertos celebration comes from the ancient wisdom of the indigenous people of Meso and South America that through the years has been open to many spiritual influences of this ever-developing world and changing universe we live in. The multicultural community of the Canal Neighborhood hosts the celebration and welcomes residents and visitors to the City of San Rafael to share in a grateful acknowledgement of the continuing ebb and flow of existence in ways we do not understand.

To honor the diversity of the Canal Area, our celebrations have also included altars from other cultures and individuals or agencies who, although not Latinx, want to be included. We welcome everybody! We envision that this year, individuals may want to honor a friend or loved one they have lost, a cause, or possibly those who have died from COVID-19.

This year, altar creators will be able to choose: a) to build an altar to be viewed at the celebration on November 6 by approximately 2,000 attendees, b) to be paired with a Downtown San Rafael business and place an altar in their storefront window, c) Downtown businesses can choose to create their own altars in their windows and have their business included on our published altar lists for the public to view, or d) to build an altar at home and share photos with us.

Included is an application and guidelines on how to create an altar. We hope you will help us celebrate this year.

For questions or additional information please contact Steve Mason at [steve.mason@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:steve.mason@cityofsanrafael.org) or (415) 485-3079.

Thank you!

Respectfully,

Lin-Yu Diaz, Co-Altar Committee Chair

Steve Mason, Co-Altar Committee Chair



# Altar Installation Application

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Office Use Only: # \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Group/Organization(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (important): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name or Theme of Altar: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to:

- Build an altar at the celebration at the Albert J. Boro Community Center on November 6th
- Be assigned to a downtown business and create an altar in their window
- I have a business and would like to build my own altar and included it on the event's listing.  
Are you able to provide your own table or stand?  Yes  No  
Downtown Celebration Dates: October 1 – November 6. Please indicate dates that your altar could be on display: \_\_\_\_\_
- I have a business and would like to host an altar built by someone else. Please indicate dates that your altar could be on display: \_\_\_\_\_
- I will build an altar in my own home/office and email photos to share with the community.

Requirements for in-person event or business window:\* (check all that apply):

- Free Standing (No wall needed)
- Need wall space
- Need power (Bring your own extension cord)  
Are you able to provide your own table or stand?  Yes  No  
Celebration Dates: October 1 – November 6. Please indicate dates that your altar could be on display: \_\_\_\_\_ (Downtown altars only.)

\*Requirements are subject to availability.

Please submit to:

Albert J. Boro Community Center, 50 Canal Street, San Rafael, CA 94901 or  
Email to [steve.mason@cityofsanrafael.org](mailto:steve.mason@cityofsanrafael.org)

In order to be considered for space, this application must be received in hard copy or by email no later than September 17, 2021.



## 2021 ALTAR GUIDELINES

**Theme:** Pick a theme important to you. It may be “personal”, such as a lost loved one(s), which follows the Latin American tradition most closely. You may pick a hero(s)/heroine(s). You may also choose to have your theme honor victims of a historic or current event, such as an issue of social justice or COVID. Try to personalize it with authentic photographs, etc. Viewers can identify with real people better than with an abstract cause.

**Objects to include:** marigold flowers, photos (preferably framed), Day of the Dead bread (available at local Mexican stores), food (think colorful Fall fruits and vegetables), water, unlit candles, tablecloth, Day of the Dead decorations, artwork, smiling skulls, anything the deceased may need or like in the afterlife, objects that the deceased loved or used in the real world, a small sign with the altar’s dedication.

**Objects NOT to include:** Candy, literature or other hand-outs. Keep in mind that viewers, especially children, are discouraged from touching any objects on the altars. Halloween objects are not appropriate. Note that Day of the Dead skulls are not scary; they are colorful and smiling. Please do not include anything irreplaceable, as we cannot guarantee its safety.

### **Set-up:**

#### In Businesses and Home

For those who choose to have their altar displayed in various San Rafael businesses you will be paired with a participating business and provided their contact information. If you will be preparing an altar in your own business, please let us know so that we can include you on our list for the public to see. If you create an altar in your home, please let us know and send us photos so we can share on our social media pages. Ideally you will have all of the supplies you need, including a small table. No tacks or pins are allowed. Altars will be available for public viewing so please do not include something valuable. Please be respectful of the altar hosts (businesses) and do not bring anything too messy or that needs maintenance.

Set-up Date: Friday, October 1, 2021 – Saturday, November 6, 2021. Altars are permitted to be on display for a shorter amount of time with preapproval. Downtown altars must be on display at least by Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> during the Día de los Muertos Downtown Car Procession. Please bring your own supplies, (**no tacks or pins are allowed**).

#### At Event/Albert J. Boro Community Center

You may construct your altar on a table (we have a limited number of card tables and 6-foot tables available on a first come, first serve basis). Or, we encourage you to be creative and construct your altar out of boxes, wood, bamboo, furniture, or other media. Think of a gravesite or family home. Layering with different levels, such as with boxes,



and colorful fabrics, is very effective. You will have all adjoining wall and floor space which you should include in your design. “Blue tape” is the only way permitted to attach items to the wall. Please bring your own blue tape.

Set-up Date: Saturday, November 6, 2021 from 9:00AM through 2:00PM. All altars must be completed by 2PM! Please bring your own supplies, (no tacks or pins allowed). Altars will remain up for the community event only. **Altars are to be deconstructed the following Monday, November 8th between 9AM and 6PM.** Altars may not be taken down the evening of the event. Remember that the altars will be available for public viewing so please do not include something valuable.

**Please complete and return the altar application to reserve your space.**

