

Statement Delivered to Media in advance of the 2015 silent protest of the Entrada at Fiestas de Santa Fe

Every year on Fiesta Friday, a dramatized re-enactment of one moment in history is held on the plaza - "Entrada of Don Diego de Vargas." This re-enactment depicts when Don Diego de Vargas "peacefully reconquered" Santa Fe. However, there is another narrative of that time in history and of this land. Locals, supported by prayers from global and local communities, are working to re-envision the Santa Fe Fiesta celebration, specifically *without* "Entrada of Don Diego de Vargas." The goal is to expand the narrative *of the history of this place* that is celebrated each year in effort to tell a collective story with accuracy at the forefront.

On September 11, 2015, we will gather together to move forward by acknowledging our faults and our past transgressions, for the future of our communities. Our example will reflect a deeper historical truth as we invite our community to have difficult conversations. By reaching inward to examine our traditions that are steeped in racism and conflict, we will break the chains of violence and oppression.

Before we can claim to be inclusive and celebrate 400 years of living in harmony and peace with multiple cultures, we, as a community, need to publically acknowledge our complicity in colonialism and racism. *We must 'decolonize' Fiestas if we are to make it welcoming to all.* Only then can we move forward for the sake of our youth and future generations. The anger and pain felt by native people is our responsibility to unpack.

We are currently experiencing a story that fosters feelings of oppressions and outward acts of violence. Our brothers and sisters are often imprisoned or plagued with drug and alcohol addiction resulting in high rates of suicide, homicide and more violence. This is all underpinned by cyclical poverty. But we can change the story. By coming together with truth and reconciliation we can move forward from perpetuating racism and conquest to depicting the multi-layered history of this land.

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