

## ***Noche de Cuentos* at Midwinter 2012: A Celebration of Storytelling**

By Alicia K. Long



*Cuentan, cuentan los que cuentan...* / The tellers tell their tales... On this note, author, librarian, and bilingual storyteller Lucía M. González, who is also past President of REFORMA, opened the night to celebrate the oral tradition of telling stories.

The tired feet of some of those who traveled the hallways of the Dallas Convention Center all day on Saturday January 21, 2012 had found a place to rest after following the trail to the Dallas Public Library. The cool night was perfect to get together and enjoy the joy of the spoken word...

The library opened its doors for the REFORMA-sponsored night of storytelling specially organized for those attending the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting. *Noche de Cuentos* was born when ALA 2009-2010 President Dr. Camila Alire launched the Family Literacy Focus (FLF,) an initiative to encourage and inspire families in ethnically diverse communities to read and learn together. As part of the FLF initiative, REFORMA awards *Noche De Cuentos* mini-grants to library programs that honor the oral tradition, bring generations together, and build strong literacy skills.

One of the characteristics of this type of programming involves the highlighting of local performers. In this case, Texas was very well represented by a variety of performers. The talented presentations of Lucia Gonzalez (who coincidentally shares her name with REFORMA's past-president,) Toni Simmons, Consuelo Samarripa, Wiline Owens, Asani Charles, and Erica Conway captivated the audience with an assortment of topics, from traditional stories of love and death, to laughing at the wisdom of the African animals, not to mention that they had to participate singing and making noises and motions along with the storytellers.

In addition, the program included the presentation of the Estela and Raúl Mora Award. This honor is attributed every year to one or more libraries for exemplary efforts in promoting *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*. The winning libraries are the Santa Ana Public Library in California, and the Springfield Public Library in Oregon. Emily Ziglinsky was in attendance to receive the award on behalf of the Springfield Public Library. REFORMA President Maria Kramer presented the awards and stated that both of these libraries did an excellent work in which they involved their communities in the celebration of children and books.



The extraordinary talent and multicultural background of the performers was a treat to all who attended, and it proved that storytelling unites generations and is a tradition enjoyed by all, in every culture.

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