Latin American Festival marks 30th year in downtown Worcester after COVID-19 hiatus

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WORCESTER — After two years of cancellations due to COVID-19, the Latin American Festival returned in-person to the city Common Oval this year to celebrate its 30th anniversary.

“The Latin American community of Worcester was hit hard by COVID, so it feels good to do something that brings happiness,” Tina Velazquez, an organizer for the festival, said.

Valeria Ramos agreed.

“It’s good just to bring Latin American culture to everybody so they can enjoy what we do,” Ramos, another organizer, said.

Velazquez said an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 people from throughout the region were expected to brave the heat Saturday and visit downtown Worcester for the event, enjoying food from throughout Latin America, 10 musical acts, dance performances and more.

After 2020's festival was canceled outright due to the pandemic, last year's event was held virtually.

“We needed this,” Carmen Torres said, noting the two-year hiatus due to COVID. “It's about getting together and celebrating our culture, the food, the music.”

Community outreach
Meanwhile, community organizations set up booths to provide outreach to the Latino community.

“Community is at the heart of our name and at the heart of what we do, and we support the Latino community and tell them what we do,” Luis Pedraja, president of Quinsigamond Community College, said while manning the school’s booth.

“I try to get out to festivals as much as I can,” Pedraja continued. “It shows that community leaders are engaged in the community, I think that’s good.”


“Everybody have a great day and enjoy each other,” Petty said after officially proclaiming Aug. 20, 2022, Latin American Festival Day.