



**School District U-46**

Educational Service Center

355 E. Chicago St., Elgin, IL 60120-6543

Tel: 847.888.5000 x5760

Fax: 847.608.2778

Dr. Suzanne Johnson, Superintendent

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[www.u-46.org](http://www.u-46.org)

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**Contact:** Tara Burghart

Phone: 847-888-5000, ext. 5300

## **U-46 Educational Foundation and Gail Borden Public Library Foundation to Present Day of the Dead Race and Festival**

*November event will celebrate Mexican culture*

**ELGIN** - Two local organizations are teaming up to present a major celebration of Mexican culture. A unique display, festival, and 5K will showcase community diversity while raising funds to support thousands of residents served by both School District U-46 and the Gail Borden Public Library District.

Running of the skeletons, artistically decorated cultural Olmec heads, huge Catrina puppets, an ofrenda (display for honoring loved ones), live music, and food will kick off the Day of the Dead Festival on Nov. 2, 2024. In remarkable fashion, the Gail Borden Public Library District Foundation and the U-46 Educational Foundation have partnered to create an extraordinary family-friendly race and fall season for this community.

On Saturday, Nov. 2, El Trote De Las Calacas (the Skeleton Trot), a USTF-certified 5K race (and walk) steps off amid music and fanfare at 8 a.m. on a course that begins at the Gail Borden Public Library at 270 N. Grove Ave., Elgin, and winds through Elgin's historic northeast neighborhood and scenic bike path along the Fox River. Library trustee and VNA Clinical Coordinator Elisa Lara will be the race MC. Early bird race registration opens on July 1 at [gailborden.info/trote](http://gailborden.info/trote).

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Additionally, sponsorship opportunities are available for businesses and organizations interested in supporting this unique cultural event while gaining exposure to a diverse audience.

Following the race, the Day of the Dead Festival opens in the Library at 10 a.m. Visitors will enjoy cultural vendors, a bilingual storytime, a presentation of ofrenda elements, face painting, a Mexican lottery, a take-home craft, sales of items to make your own ofrenda, and a photo booth with the Library's Catrinas. Plus, there will be live music by Yael Xolalpa accompanied by Chaparrita de Oro-Xitlali and a mariachi band, a costume contest for adults and kids, champurrado (Mexican hot chocolate) and sweet bread, information tables, and more!

November 2 will be a memorable day, and it will be followed by an unforgettable November and December in the Library when it hosts 33 originally decorated Olmec heads. The Olmec project was spearheaded by the Mexican Cultural Center of DuPage, and the large heads are currently on display throughout DuPage County. Experts calculate that the Olmecs lived in Mexico between 1400 BCE to 400 BCE. Giant stone heads are part of their legacy. The current description of these heads from the City of West Chicago states, "Olmec Trails' pays tribute to the indigenous roots of Mexican heritage as well as brings attention to the importance of public art by showcasing the immense talent and creativity of 33 contemporary artists from across North America."

"We are extremely excited about this event and this partnership with the U-46 Educational Foundation," said Karen Fox, the president of the Gail Borden Public Library Foundation. "Both foundations along with Library staff bring creative and unique ideas that enhance events such as the Skeleton Trot and Day of the Dead Festival. From the Olmec giant heads to the ofrenda display, which honors the memories of loved ones, our community has the chance to learn about and participate in vibrant cultural activities."

John Devereux, the president of the U-46 Educational Foundation, was equally enthusiastic about this partnership and event, saying, "Both foundations have hosted 5K races in their respective pasts. This is an opportunity to reach competitive runners from the Chicago area and beyond, as well as local walkers paying tribute to their family members and friends."

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We invite participants and sponsors to join us in being part of this unique cultural event. The funds raised from this race will positively impact many in our communities.”

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**About the U-46 Educational Foundation** – From scholarships for deserving college-bound seniors to grants for teachers and staff, the U-46 Educational Foundation creates opportunities that expand student learning and well-being for the nearly 35,000 students in School District U-46. [www.u-46.org/Foundation](http://www.u-46.org/Foundation)

**About the Gail Borden Public Library District Foundation** – The foundation celebrates the library’s quest to enhance literacy in the community and to sustain a world-class library district that supports reading initiatives, engaging exhibits that have changed lives, capital projects and more. [www.gailborden.info/foundation](http://www.gailborden.info/foundation)

*Both foundations are nonprofit organizations and all donations are tax exempt.*