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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WGBY Announces April 14th Premiere of *Presencia*, Its First Local Bilingual Production

The PBS member station for western New England created the magazine-format TV show to connect with and reflect the diversity of the region.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS. — Por primera vez (for the first time), local PBS member station WGBY is producing a bilingual (English/Spanish) magazine-format TV show focused on the Latino communities of western New England.

To succeed in its mission of “building a stronger community through learning and understanding,” the public television station recognizes its content must reflect the diversity of the region. For that reason, WGBY viewers will be hearing a bit more Spanish on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

CELEBRATING ‘LA CULTURA’

Hosted by WGBY’s Veronica Garcia and Zydalis Bauer, *Presencia* captures the stories of the Latino community. The program is designed not only to inspire and inform the region about the growing Latino population, but also to engage and enhance the social spirit.

“We will create a platform for dialogue that will result in uniting and engaging the community,” says show host Veronica Garcia.

Presencia will have a local focus, featuring conversations specifically about the Latino history, diversity, and traditions in the region. It will also showcase inspiring true stories, highlight rich cultural heritage, and spotlight local talent.

“As a Latina who grew up in Springfield, I feel honored to be given the opportunity to work with an amazing talented team and provide a space on WGBY that will feature our community stories and accomplishments through a positive lens,” explains *Presencia* Executive Producer Vanessa Pabón-Hernandez.

PARA LA COMUNIDAD

According to the U.S. Census’ *2010 Census Redistricting Data [P.L. 94-171] Summary File*, the Latino population of Western New England is anywhere from 10 and 15 percent — and growing quickly. Using data from that same report, the Pew Hispanic Research Center reports Hampden County as having a Latino population of 21 percent. The [U.S. Census’ QuickFacts website](#)’s 2010 data shows even greater concentrations of Latino populations in the cities of Holyoke (48 percent) and Springfield (38 percent).

Whatever the precise figure, it’s safe to say that WGBY’s Latino and bilingual market is vast and growing. For this reason, the TV station created *Presencia*.

“I think it is remarkable for a number of reasons,” explains WGBY General Manager Rus Peotter. “First, though our Latino community has been an important and growing part of our region’s culture and economy for generations, there has never been a regular, local TV program for the Latino community. While there are scores of events, several Spanish-language TV stations and a thriving Latino radio presence, somehow a local video “presence” took a while to develop.”

Thanks to the “loyalty and persistence” of WGBY’s Latino Advisory Board, however, Peotter explains that the station has “finally put the pieces together for this first season.”

“These shows are special for another reason,” Peotter adds. “At the advice of our advisors, it will not be exclusively in Spanish. Some segments or even conversations may be in English or both. We’ll be using captioning and other tools to make it as accessible as possible to all viewers.”

WGBY’s *Presencia* will air Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. on WGBY beginning April 14. It is sponsored in part by Alekman DiTusa LLC, Chicopee Savings Charitable Foundation, MassMutual Financial Group, Freedom Credit Union, and Webster Bank.

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ABOUT WGBY

WGBY (www.wgby.org) is a community-supported public broadcasting organization connecting the people of western New England to events, ideas, and each other through national PBS programming and locally produced series and specials. With four digital television channels, video on demand, podcasting, and streaming video, WGBY is one of the region’s most accessible community institutions. WGBY is available over the air on digital channel 57-1 and on cable throughout western Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut and can be seen in high definition in western Massachusetts at Comcast 857, Time Warner 1807, Charter 782, and over the air on channel 57.