

Middle School Winner: **Analia Rodriguez**

Tomlinson Middle School, Fairfield

Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest Submission

My parents came from Paraguay many years ago. One of the traditions they passed down to me is traditional Paraguayan dance. For more than one hundred years, these dances have been part of the way people celebrate life. The dresses are colorful, the music is joyful, and the famous Bottle Dance shows skill and balance. When I dance, I feel connected to my family and to my culture.

Traditional dance inspires me because it is more than just moving to music. It tells a story. It reminds me that I carry something important from the past that still matters today. I feel proud when I wear my dress and perform, because I know I am keeping a tradition alive. In the picture I am sharing, I am dancing the Bottle Dance, and it shows how I carry this tradition with pride.

In the United States, this tradition has a special impact. Here we live with many different cultures, and that is what makes our country unique. When I dance, I get to share a piece of my background with others. At the same time, I also learn about their traditions. This exchange helps us respect each other and see that diversity makes us stronger.

I am proud to be American, and I am proud that I carry the Paraguayan traditions of my family. By sharing my dance, I make an impact here in the United States because I help bring people together. My culture becomes part of the larger American story, and it shows that our diversity is not only something to celebrate, but also something that makes us stronger as a nation.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT MY OFFICE :

 **Bridgeport: (203) 333-6600**

 **Washington: (202) 225-5541**

 **Stamford: (203) 353-9400**

 **<https://himes.house.gov/>**