



NEWS

Compton College | Community Relations
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For Immediate Release

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Compton College to Host Guest Author and Poet Jimmy Santiago Baca October 11

Jimmy Santiago Baca is an award-winning poet, novelist, and essayist who will speak and read from his works as part of Compton College's Latino Heritage Month celebration on October 11 at 11:30 a.m. The complimentary event will take place in the Compton College Little Theater, located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, California. The event is open to the public and will also include a question and answer period, book signing, and refreshments.

During his presentation, Baca will share how his adverse past has influenced and inspired his writing. Born in New Mexico of Apache and Chicano descent, he spent his childhood on the margins of society, first abandoned by his parents, he then ran away from an orphanage, and later was convicted of a crime. During his six years in prison, Baca chose to teach himself to read and write, emerging from prison as a self-taught writer.

Baca had his first works published while he was still in prison, in the late 1970s; three of his poems were published in *Mother Jones* magazine, jump starting his writing career. Those same three poems were included in the volume titled "Immigrants in Our Own Land," which came out the year he was released in 1979. The author of more than 11 volumes of poetry and three novels, Baca has been the recipient of several awards and honors during his writing career including the Pushcart Prize, the American Book Award, the International Hispanic Heritage Award, and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. He was also honored with the International Prize, which he received for his 2001 novel, "A Place to Stand." Most recently, he was the recipient of the University of California, Santa Barbara 2010 Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature.

Currently, Baca splits his focus between his own writing and his nonprofit foundation, Cedar Tree, Inc. Established in 2004 in New Mexico, Cedar Tree offers literary workshops, training, and outreach programs for at-risk youth, the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, as well as other disadvantaged communities. The organization's mission is to provide underserved communities with the tools necessary to overcome hardships or obstacles to learning.

Baca holds a bachelor's degree in English and an honorary doctorate degree in literature from the University of New Mexico.

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About Compton College

Compton College is the community's education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. Compton College is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.