

Hispanic American celebration to be held Saturday

By Kristen Marquez
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Celebrate the rich traditions of Hispanic cultures in honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month beginning noon, Saturday at Patrick Henry Elementary School in Heidelberg.

The Hispanic American celebration is free and will feature music, piñatas, country displays and food sampling. A live performance by the MamboKingo ensemble, featuring special guest Héctor René Colón, is also scheduled.

"It's a chance for different ethnic groups and cultures to interact with each other and learn about the Hispanic culture, as well as some of their traditions, values and beliefs," said Sgt. 1st Class David G. Green, U.S. Army Garrison Baden-Württemberg equal opportunity advisor.

"Anyone who attends this event can expect to experience the Hispanic culture by seeing some of their many traditions and experience the many different tastes of Hispanic foods."

The MamboKingo ensemble traces its roots to the 2007

Hispanic heritage celebration, when community members volunteered to provide musical entertainment for the event. Composed of Soldiers, Army civilians and retirees, MamboKingo performs a variety of authentic Latin percussion rhythms while incorporating music and dances from all across the Hispanic culture.

Last year's event drew nearly 200 people and Green said he's hoping for higher attendance numbers this year.

"The Hispanic American Heritage Month celebration is not just for Hispanic Americans," Green said. "I have spoken with several people in regards to attending observances, and one of the first things they say about not attending observances is 'I am not Hispanic American.'"

Hispanic American Heritage Month, American Indian Heritage Month, African American/Black History Month, Women's History Month and Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, are not just for those particular gender or ethnicities, Green said. They are a way for others to learn about and celebrate different



The MamboKingo ensemble, featuring special guest Héctor René Colón, will perform at Saturday's Hispanic American celebration at Patrick Henry Elementary School from noon until 3 p.m. The celebration, in honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, will also feature country displays, food sampling and piñatas.

cultures.

Green points out observances are conducted to recognize the continuous achievements of all Americans.

"Observances are not designed to bash one ethnic group or gender group against another, but purely designed to educate and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding," he said.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Getting Involved: Our Families, Our Community, Our Nation."

National Hispanic Heritage Month began Sept. 15, which is the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries - Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. It runs through Oct. 15.

In a proclamation to the nation, President George W. Bush lauded the courage of Hispanic Americans who have served America in the military. More than 25 have received the Medal of Honor.

The Hispanic American Celebration is scheduled from noon to 3 p.m. For more information contact the EO/EEO office at DSN 373-7955.