

Distinguished Judges Panel

Margarita Chavez



Margarita Chávez was born and raised in Santa Ana, California, and continues to be a proud resident of the city. She earned her Bachelor of Arts, teaching credentials and Masters of Education in Curriculum and Foundations from Chapman University. Margarita has worked as an educator, guest instructor, tutor, and mentor in the cities of Santa Ana and Garden Grove.

In 2001, Margarita became a part of the first high school based mariachi in Orange County, Mariachi Los Santos de Santa Ana High School, under the direction of the late Bill Hassing (1952-2017). Margarita also spent time with Santa Ana College's Don Mariachi, where she furthered her passion for the art form.

Margarita first experienced working with mariachi youth as an assistant with Mariachi Los Potrillitos through Garden Grove Unified School District. In 2012, she created the after school music and mariachi program at the Orange County Educational Arts Academy through which her students were featured performers with the International House of Blues Give Forward Foundation grant.

Margarita is currently an elementary school music teacher with Santa Ana Unified School District. Margarita has started a mariachi program at Pio Pico Elementary School - one of the first schools in Orange County to incorporate a mariachi program in its mainstream curriculum. With support from the SAUSD district and colleagues, Margarita hopes to strengthen and grow the mariachi programs in the city of Santa Ana.

Margarita's true passions are mariachi and education, and she will continue to spread the mariachi love in Santa Ana. Margarita is very thankful to the event staff for the generous opportunity in returning as a judge.

Margarita is serving as a judge at the Battle of the Mariachi Festival for her seventh consecutive year.