

# Dr. Raul Ruiz to Address Planned Parenthood Anniversary Dinner

*Son of farm workers was first Latino to receive three graduate degrees from Harvard*

When Raul Ruiz was four years old, he decided he wanted to become a doctor. The son of farm workers in the Coachella Valley, Ruiz saw the effects of limited access to health care, and felt compelled to serve this unmet need in his community.

Then it was time for college. Ruiz was smart as a whip and hyper-motivated, so admission to University of California at Los Angeles was no problem for him. Tuition was another story. Determined to attend college, Ruiz went door-to-door and asked his neighbors to invest in his education with the promise that he would return and serve as a physician in the community.

Today, Dr. Ruiz is the first Latino to earn three graduate degrees from Harvard University. He is keeping his promise to the community and then some. In 2009, he began a mentorship program open to high school, college and medical school students who shadow Dr. Ruiz and colleagues in the Eisenhower Medical Center in the Coachella Valley and other health care facilities. "The whole idea is for the students to ex-

perience the rewards of serving the under-served," says Dr. Ruiz. "The program builds confidence and gives students real-world leadership experience in providing compassionate medical care." Ruiz is also the Senior Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Partnership at the University of California at Riverside School of Medicine.

On April 26, Dr. Ruiz will address more than 1,200 supporters of Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest at its Anniversary Dinner at San Diego's Bayfront Hilton. "My values closely align with Planned Parenthood, an organization that provides essential preventive health care like cervical, breast and testicular exams, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and contraception," says Dr. Ruiz. "Latinos have higher rates of teen pregnancy and STDs because of the lack of access to health care and health education, which is rooted in systemic inequity. I admire how Planned Parenthood works to empower every community with medical care and accurate information, which is why I am honored to



*Dr. Raul Ruiz*

be the featured speaker at the Anniversary Dinner."

Though Ruiz is on the go non-stop, volunteering his services and mentoring young people, he still makes time to connect with nature. He describes his midnight full moon desert hikes as a spiritual experience. Ruiz states that his spirituality is more than a list of activities "It's more about how you live a life of respecting elders, serving others and sacrificing of self for the betterment of the community."

For more information or to purchase tickets please visit [planned.org](http://planned.org)