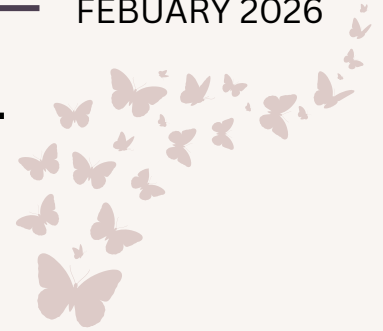




YOU CAN DO IT MIJA!



MOVING WITH MOMENTUM



Hola Mija community, and welcome to the first edition of our monthly newsletter! To start off, we are excited to share reflections from last semester and highlight what is ahead for the semester to come.

During the Fall 2025 semester, the Mija Program nurtured meaningful connections with women and teens both on and off campus. Our team grew to five UNM-Taos student mentors, whose unique leadership skills and creative ideas have invigorated our program offerings.

Mija student mentors developed and facilitated five weeks of empowerment-focused curriculum for more than fifty freshman girls in health classes at Taos High School. Through artmaking, movement practices, singing, journaling, and visits from women community leaders, Mija supported teens in self-reflection, confidence-building, celebrating their cultural heritage, and forming supportive relationships with our mentors. We have also been meeting monthly with a small but mighty group of students of all grade levels at Vista Grande High School, where the mentors have been leading a similar series of

sessions that focus on empowerment through experiential practices and one-on-one mentoring.

We hosted two mentor trainings on campus in September, onboarding six community members as volunteer mentors. The Mija Program also collaborated with MEChA on a festive papel picado-making event to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. And of course, we kicked off the fall semester with a party at Revolt Gallery Annex—complete with a DJ and dancing, collective painting, a Mija photo gallery, and homemade empanadas.

This semester, mentors look forward to leading a second cohort of freshman girls at Taos High School later this spring and continuing our mentoring visits with Vista Grande High School. We are also excited to continue building community with our Winter Party in February and monthly Mija Monday! Read on for more details about these upcoming events.

As we welcome more women and teens into the program, we are working to create one-on-one mentoring matches and mentoring trios. We invite additional students and community members to join the program as mentors and/or mentees—join the Mija Program and be part of our growing community.

And look out for a community event in the works for International Women’s Day in March! We’ll share details in our next newsletter and on our social media page @unmtaosmijas

Upcoming Events

- ✦ MIJA WINTER PARTY
February 14
- ✦ MIJA MONDAY
February 23





INTRODUCING Mija Mondays

Mija Mondays is a monthly gathering for women at UNM Taos designed to foster community, leadership, and empowerment. Our gatherings provide a safe and supportive space to share experiences, build meaningful connections, and receive mutual support.

Each Mija Monday gathering will combine reflection, conversation, and hands-on activities designed to help participants cultivate the skills and confidence to become leaders within their own lives and make positive impacts in their communities. Participants will have the opportunity to explore personal growth, strengthen self-leadership, and engage in practices that nurture emotional, mental, and social wellbeing. Whether it's through interactive workshops, collaborative projects, or guided discussions, each session is designed to leave you feeling inspired, equipped, and empowered to step fully into your potential.

Bring your curiosity and creativity, and leave with renewed motivation, tools, and lasting connections with women who are committed to uplifting one another. All are welcome – come as you are and leave feeling inspired!

Spring Schedule 2026

FEB 23	BREATHWORK w/ Melissa 4:00 - 5:00 PM Padre Martinez Hall ABCD
MAR 30	ZUMBA w/ Neida 4:00 - 5:00 PM Padre Martinez Hall ABCD
APR 27	TBA 4:00 - 5:00 PM Padre Martinez Hall ABCD
MAY 11	TBA 4:00 - 5:00 PM Padre Martinez Hall ABCD

MUJERES OF MIJA Melissa Rorman



Meet Melissa: our on-campus community connector & Mija Mentor! Melissa Rorman is a UNM-Taos liberal arts student and hairstylist living in Taos, New Mexico. For over a decade, Melissa has been helping people feel confident and expressive through her work as a hairstylist and cosmetology instructor, while also bringing years of practice and study in Yoga & Ayurvedic Therapy. With her combined experience in these fields, Melissa brings a deep understanding of the mind-body balance and a holistic approaches to wellness.

She is passionate about fostering growth and connection, both on an individual level and within the community. Melissa has worked with community-based centers and programs such as such as Head Start, spiritual non-profits and retreat centers, and assisted living facilities - helping people of all ages feel supported, empowered, and nurtured. Melissa is actively involved in planning gatherings such as Mija Mondays, helping to create opportunities for connection, leadership, and mutual support for women on campus.





MIJA MOMENT

Gabriella Ortiz

A Taos native and Vista Grande High School student, Gabriella Ortiz has been a part of You Can Do It Mija program for the last year. What Gabi enjoys most about the Mija program is the sense of togetherness and the ability to form relationships with the mentors and even closer relationships with the other girls in the program. When asked what “Mija” means to her, Gabi responds with deep personal meaning and connection to her grandparents. “They were key people who helped raise me and so they say I am one of their daughters, not just granddaughter. Mija means that I am your daughter. I am someone who you love and look after when it’s hard because we need each other.”

With a strong love for her cultural roots, Gabi enjoys being an Aztec dancer and hopes to travel to Mexico or Spain one day to learn more about her heritage. Gabi is a creative soul with a wide array of hobbies. She enjoys writing, painting, stargazing, listening to music, and going to car shows. Gabi also loves to express herself through make-up and fashion.

Since the third grade, Gabi has dreamed of becoming an author and has continued to pursue that passion with strong dedication. She has written poetry for “*Querencia en Poesia*” a project by Miguel Santistevan, Taos Poet Laureate 2024-2025, and is currently working on a collection of poems for a book she hopes to one day publish.

If Gabi could share one message with the world, it would be:

“We are all seeds to our mother earth. Other plants may grow faster and taller than you, others may grow slower and shorter than you. Keep in mind to not let your self-doubt ruin your potential, and don’t let your ego make you believe that other plants are less than you.”

Thank you Gabriella for being such a beautiful and inspiring force within our Mija community and we can’t wait to see all the amazing things that lie ahead in your journey. You can do it, Mija!

Strong,
Beautiful,
Peaceful.

May the tears from your body flourish my desert -
Like skin.
Make the flowers lift,
Grass green,
Make communities survive.

Fill the acequias which grows your accessories,
Feed our communities.

Touch the chilled, natural drops,
Feel the Earth kiss you.
Lay on her hair,
Feel her breath.

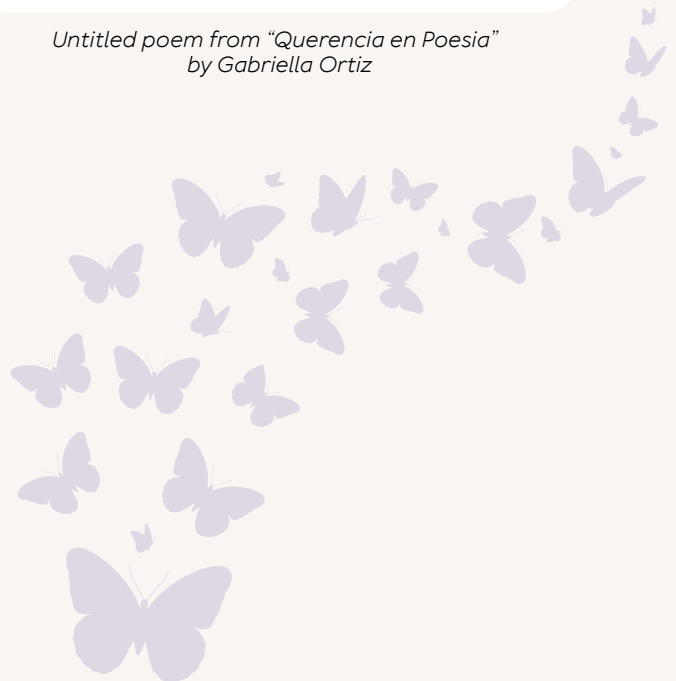
Swallow the water,
The taste of life,
The taste of nothing.

Earthy,
Soil-like,
Smell the fragment of what brings life.

Trickling drops,
Movement against the rocks,
Hear the water.
Smell the rain,
Feel her tears,
See life as it forms,
Taste the growth.

Tlatoc.

Untitled poem from “*Querencia en Poesia*”
by Gabriella Ortiz





INSPIRACIÓN

Martha Bernal



Born in 1931 in San Antonio, Texas, Martha Bernal grew up in a time when universities and scientific fields were not built with Chicana women or Mexican American families in mind. Opportunities were limited, expectations were low, and very few people who looked like her were seen as scholars or leaders in psychology. Still, Dr. Bernal pushed forward and 1962, she became the first Mexican American woman to earn a PhD in psychology in the United States — a historic milestone that quietly but powerfully changed the field.

Dr. Bernal didn't just break barriers for herself. She used her voice and her research to challenge harmful ideas about Latino youth and families. At a time when mainstream psychology often misunderstood Latino communities, she asked a powerful question: *What if culture isn't the problem — what if it's the strength?*

Through her research, Dr. Bernal centered culture, family, and community as sources of resilience and pride. She challenged biased theories and pushed for culturally in-

formed mental health care that reflected real lived experiences. Her work helped reshape how psychology understands ethnic identity, confidence, and the ways children see themselves in a society that often misunderstood them.

Just as important as her scholarship was her commitment to opening doors for others. She mentored students, supported young scholars, and helped build what is now known as Chicana/o/x Psychology. Because of her leadership, generations of psychologists found pathways into a field that had long excluded them.

Dr. Martha Bernal didn't just make history — she made room. She showed that identity is a source of strength and that representation changes knowledge itself. Conversations about mental health, identity, and belonging are stronger today because of the space she created.





CELEBRATE WITH US

you're invited

Mija Winter Party

February 14 2-4PM

OMNIHUM GALLERY
246 LEDOUX STREET - SUITE B, TAOS

Celebrate love, sisterhood, and community with the Mija Mentorship Program. Live music, Valentine-making station, yummy treats, and chair massage from the UNM-Taos bodywork program.



website

you can do it, mija



Donations gratefully accepted to benefit Sin Fronteras

MIJA MONDAY



FEB 23 **Meet & Greet + Breathwork**
Padre Martinez Hall ABCD
4:00 - 5:00 PM

JOIN US for Mija Monday—a gathering space for women rooted in community, support, and empowerment. Come connect with a community of women committed to uplifting one another and cultivating leadership from within.

All Are Welcome!



GET IN TOUCH

Looking to collaborate with the You Can Do It, Mija program?
We'd love to hear from you with your ideas, questions, or community happenings!
Email us at mija@unm.edu or call Opal at 575-737-3736.

Interested in becoming a Mija Mentor or an advocate for the program?
[Sign up here.](#)

Follow us on social media and visit our website to stay up to date:
[Mija Instagram](#)
[Mija Website](#)

