

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on April 3, 2002 honoring

Alicia Espinoza Cortez

Alicia Espinoza Cortez, 1913-1984, teacher and community volunteer. If one person can be held up as the epitome of service to the Chino community, it is Alicia Cortez.

Sweet of temperament and totally unselfish with her time and interest, she participated in all phases of community life, providing comfort to the ill, joy with her music to many, secretary and treasury services to multiple organizations and leadership which brought a better life to Mexican American neighborhoods.

She helped start the Chino Council of Social Services, helped the original Head Start program, served on the Chino Hospital Auxiliary and the Red Cross Board, belonged to the Soroptimist Club and Community Center Guild, taught Sunday school and played the organ at the Mexican Congregational Church, and provided piano music for the Chino Rotary Club for more than a quarter century.

She set an active pace as Chino's first lady when her husband Zeke was mayor. She helped with the Chino Sister City connection with San Juan del Rio, Mexico, and organized host families for visitors. She served with the Friends of the Library and the United Church Women, the ECO Club and the League of Women Voters.

Alicia Espinoza was born in Chino May 24, 1913. She died at home February 28, 1984.

Mrs. Cortez attended Santa Barbara State Teachers College and taught several years at "D" Street School in Chino, where she had been a student. With fellow teacher Frank Elder she went into the community to stress the importance of education to those of Mexican heritage.

Alicia Cortez Elementary, named for her, opened in 1978. Said one organization that nominated her for Citizen of the Year, which she received in 1974:

"If you need her, she is there- - - willing to take on the most humble task or to represent the city with distinction at high-level affairs. She does this, not as an extension of any profession or career, but simply because she enjoys helping people, and she is proud of the City of Chino."