

# “SAVE ETHNIC STUDIES”



## Critical Raza Educators Tucson Unified School District (RE)PRESENT

on the value of ethnic studies and on their resistance to  
**Arizona H.B. 2281** (anti-ethnic studies ban)

**Thursday, December 2  
6-7:30 PM**

**Multicultural Student Center Lounge  
Red Gym, second floor  
(716 Langdon Street, next door to Memorial Union)**

**Maria Federico Brummer** and **Sally Rusk** are educators in the **Mexican-American Studies** and **Social Justice Education Programs** of the **Tucson Unified School District in Arizona**. Please come to hear their stories about the Arizona ethnic studies ban (HB 2281) and resistance to the ban, as well as the important impact that ethnic studies programs like the program at TUSD have on students and the community. As part of their presentation, Maria and Sally will screen clips from “Precious Knowledge,” a documentary film that profiles them and other Raza educators engaged in the struggle for the survival of ethnic studies in Arizona.

**Presented by the Multicultural Student Center as part of our Social Justice Speakers Series. Co-sponsors: College of Letters & Science, Chican@ and Latin@ Studies Program, Afro-American Studies, Department of Sociology, La Follette High School**

**Contact Cynthia Lin, MSC Social Justice Educator, with questions or to inquire about small-group discussions and/or meetings. 608-262-9669, [cslin@studentlife@wisc.edu](mailto:cslin@studentlife@wisc.edu)**

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## Presenter Bios



**María Federico Brummer**

“They have a passion,” Maria Federico Brummer says of her students. They want to learn something and they want to teach something to their peers. That’s amazing.”

Federico Brummer engages her students. She lets them lead the discussion and she insists they question what they’re hearing. Sometimes the lesson plan goes out the window, eclipsed by the potent events of the world. But she knows her students will do the homework to pick that up too, and discuss all of it with their parents and friends. Her students are engaged in their community. They know who they are and where they come from. And they know how to build bridges to the rest of the world.

Some of her students don’t have the easiest lives. Some are homeless. Some have been kicked out of their homes. Some have parents who are incarcerated. Some have kids of their own. Some have been physically or sexually abused. All are cared about and respected by Maria Federico Brummer, and they know it. She nurtures their creativity, opens their minds and builds trust. She fans the flames of their love of learning and mentors the future generation of teachers.

“Our focus is on cultural identity,” she says. “The other part is critical thinking. Not accepting things at face value. Seeking the truth.”

Tucson- born and raised, Maria Federico Brummer teaches the American Government Ethnic Studies Social Justice Education Project to juniors at Tucson High School, plus American History from Mexican American Perspectives at Palo Verde High School.



**Sally Rusk**

Sally Rusk may be Anglo by birth but she’s custom made to be part of the Mexican American Studies team. She was born in Sierra Leone in West Africa where her teacher parents were on assignment in the Peace Corp. She spent her early years in Uganda before the family moved to Tucson when she was 5½. Recognizing that Tucson was a bi-cultural city, they insisted that both she and her sister learn Spanish. And they indoctrinated in her an appreciation for the unique place she grew up in.

She thought about joining the Peace Corp herself, and hasn’t ruled it out completely. But when she was approached about teaching a Mexican Studies class, Rusk jumped at the chance. “I am so grateful,” she says. “It’s given me a community of likeminded people.”

Rusk teaches at Pueblo High School – a south side institution with a student body roughly 90 percent Latino and 4 percent Native American. She teaches two bilingual world history classes, two American History through Chicano perspectives classes and an American Government Social Justice Education Project class. The American History classes are blocked back-to-back with similar literature classes covering matching material.

“I don’t see myself so much as a teacher but as a facilitator,” she says. “We want our students to be critical learners and gain confidence so that they can feel that they are part of our country, but also that they’re agents for social justice and change. Especially that they get beyond thinking that history is something from the past and see that they are part of history.”

She insists that she learns from and is continually inspired by the honesty, curiosity and creativity of her students. In their artistic projects, their metaphors and the way they connect things she would not have connected, Rusk feels that they teach her as much or more than she does them.

**For more information on TUSD Raza Studies, SB 2281, and the educator-, student-, and community-led campaign to save ethnic studies in Arizona, please visit [www.saveethnicstudies.org](http://www.saveethnicstudies.org)**