



IDRA 50th Anniversary Gala Highlights

IDRA has been celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout 2023, reflecting on a small group of concerned citizens who in 1973 set out to change the world and defend all students and their right to an excellent and equitable education.

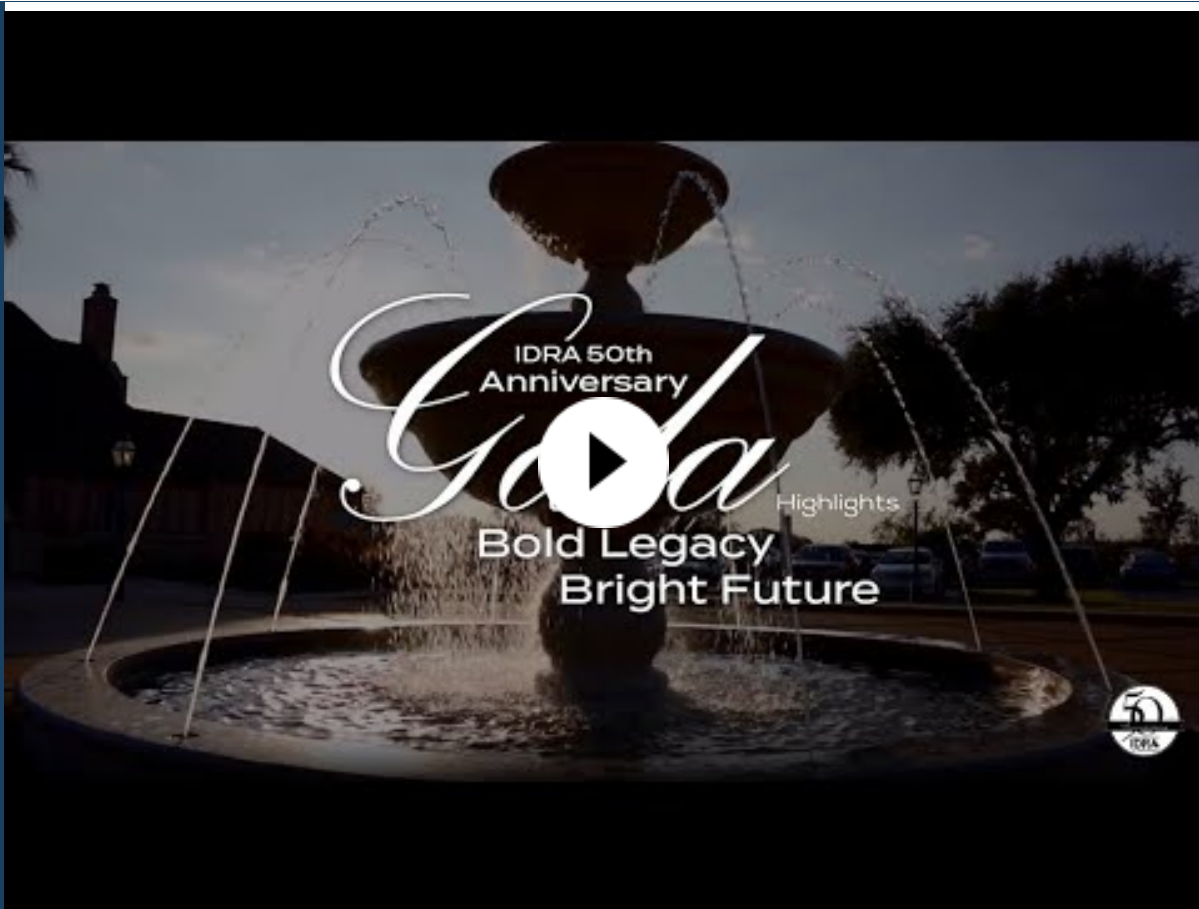
Since then, this national non-profit has helped get new and better laws passed; guided school leaders and teachers; conducted research; and created powerful student and parent leadership programs.

Our November 2 gala brought together over 300 educators, policymakers, researchers, students and advocates from across the nation to commemorate IDRA's bold legacy and bright future.

The event was magical! We are excited to share highlights with you here and [online](#). We have a number of videos live now and others we will roll out in the coming weeks, including the keynote speech by Dolores Huerta.

You can view and download images from our [photos gallery](#). (If you sponsored or hosted a table, please share this with your guests.) You can also see the [commemorative program book](#).

Highlights Video



Gala Features



Dignitaries shared their messages of congratulations. Bexar County Judge Peter Sakai who presented a [proclamation](#) recognizing the contributions of IDRA for 50 years at the local, state, and federal levels.

San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg sent a video message (above) that was punctuated with the news that the City of San Antonio issued a [proclamation](#) declaring **November 2, 2023: "IDRA Day."**

**IDRA 50th Anniversary Video –
Produced for the Gala**

**Message from San Antonio Mayor
Ron Nirenberg**



Sample Messages from Our Speakers...

"Jose Cárdenas' legacy lives on in the countless lives that have been transformed by IDRA's work. He ignited a flame that has continued to burn so brightly under the leadership of President Emerita Dr. Maria "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, and now President and CEO, Celina Moreno."

– The Honorable Juventino "Tino" Guerra, Chair, IDRA Board of Directors



"IDRA is itself an innovation. Our evolving and growing ability to work strategically and in real-time across research, policy and practice is crucial. IDRA will continue to create innovations that disrupt the failure of schools to educate all students. We are, at our core, faithful to children: All children are valuable; none is expendable."

– Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President Emerita



"IDRA was there for the Georgia Youth Justice Coalition when we started building our advocacy presence, and the backing and promotion that IDRA provided us did more than help us – it legitimized our presence and solidified our standing in Georgia's advocacy space."

– James Wilson, University Student, Georgia Youth Justice Coalition



"This program really inspired me to go into the technical field."

– Kaleb Dunn, High School Freshman, IDRA VisionCoders Program

"We are in a critical moment for K-12 public schools and higher education. We see what I call the "Texas 3-Step" happening across the country: public schools and universities are being defunded, demonized and privatized. But here's the problem with their plan. They don't know on whose shoulders we stand.

We stand on the shoulders of giants and geniuses. We stand on the shoulders of the young people and families and community organizers and teachers and lawyers who led walkouts and fought their way to the U.S. Supreme Court rather than settle for substandard schools. And, because they don't know, they underestimate our commitment to continue to fight and stand together to protect Dr. Cárdenas' legacy and the bright future of students across this nation. We will always choose to have hope in young people and in ourselves."



– Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA
President & CEO



"Everything that you're fighting for... is absolutely crucial. Every single person here deserves a quality education... In school, what do we do? We read about history. We talk about history. We write about history. But when we become activists, we *make* history. That is what you have done. IDRA has made history. We have to expand that to every single person. We can make it happen. Yes we can!"

– Dolores Huerta, founder and president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation and co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America with Cesar Chavez

Celina Moreno announced the new name of IDRA's **Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel Gadfly Award,** for Dr. Robledo Montecel's continued dedication to IDRA and its mission. IDRA was pleased to name **Dolores Huerta** as the first recipient of that award. IDRA commissioned an original *alebrije* for Ms. Huerta by artist Paul Blas Tomas of San Pedro Canonos, Oxaca.



Watch our social media accounts for more videos!



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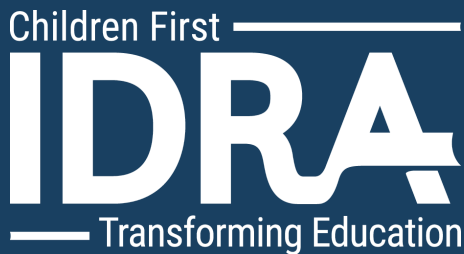
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IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

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IDRA
5815 Callaghan Road, #101
San Antonio, TX 78228
United States

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