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Paseo Boricua: Discovering Our Own Division

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Currently, high above the intersection of Division and Western on Chicago's Westside (Humboldt Park) stands a large metal Puerto Rican bandera (flag). Another of these flags appears directly six blocks west of Western at the intersection of Division and California. Together these two banderas represent the geographic boundaries of the Puerto Rican neighborhood of Chicago. Erected in 1996, the 30th anniversary of The Division Street Riots, these two flags and the space between them were renamed the Paseo Boricua. Not only does this area represent a physical presence of Puerto Rican pride, but it is also a cultural mecca of heritage in regards to the Taino Indians (the original inhabitants of Puerto Rico) and Puerto Rican culture. While my students understand the physical layout of the Paseo, many don't know the history and importance of the Paseo. Before students set out on their post-secondary career I want them to journey through a rich history that is right across the street from their school. By using original and gathered artifacts, students will examine the history of Chicago's Paseo Boricua by engaging students of both Puerto Rican and non-Puerto Rican heritage.

(Developed for Senior Seminar, grade 12; recommended for English, Social Science, and Humanities, grades 11-12)

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