

Latinxs and Hispanics in the Mathematical Sciences



“For me, Hispanic Heritage Month is about explicitly reconnecting to a part of my cultural history that has been traditionally suppressed or ignored. As a non-Spanish speaking Hispanic, raised culturally white, I sometimes struggle to know where my place is in this community, due to my privileged upbringing. Despite this, whenever I immerse myself in my Hispanic heritage, I feel a sense of peace and belonging, as though a part of my soul has come home.”

Kaitlyn Martinez

Postdoctoral Researcher, Los Alamos National Laboratory

Kaitlyn Martinez was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She is the oldest of three children, and her parents are elementary school educators. As a child of teachers, a curious and learning mindset was developed early. She attended Colorado College, a liberal arts university, with the goal of studying languages, in particular Spanish. However, as her undergraduate degree progressed, she was exposed to examples of applied math research, and started taking classes in Mathematical Biology. As soon as the application of mathematical theory became concrete, she fell in love with math and research once again. After receiving her BA, she pursued a masters and Ph.D. in Computational and Applied Mathematics from the Colorado School of Mines, where her thesis work centered on understanding the spatiotemporal spread of infectious diseases using methods from dynamical systems, statistics, and data science. She currently lives in Los Alamos, New Mexico with her artist partner and is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Kaitlyn began working at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) as a graduate student intern during the summer of 2018. She has been and is a part of teams investigating the impact of climate change on mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile Virus and Dengue and investigating socio-demographic patterns of government interventions, including vaccination, masking, and social distancing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic among many other projects. Kaitlyn advises students to always “ask the question.” The willingness to ask for what she needed or wanted has opened many doors for her, from making a test less stressful, to getting to go to Brazil as a member of an outreach delegation of female mathematical biologists with the US consulate in Rio de Janeiro. Many people in STEM fields like to “go at it alone” as many of us were taught in school. However, she finds that allowing oneself to be vulnerable and ask questions fosters a growth mindset and allows others to propel us forward.

Lathisms was founded in 2016 in order to showcase the contributions of Latinx and Hispanic mathematicians during Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated in the United States from September 15 and October 15 every year. During this time, we feature/reveal a prominent Latinx/Hispanic mathematician daily. See all the featured mathematical scientists at [LATHISMS.ORG](https://lathisms.org).

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