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Luis Rodriguez Kicks Off “Provocative Perspectives Series” Oct. 11 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Author Luis Rodriguez will kick-off Cal Poly’s Provocative Perspectives series with his talk “Hearts and Hands: Creating Community in Troubled Times” The first installment of the annual series begins at 8 a.m., Thursday, October 11 at Vista Grande Café on the Cal Poly campus.

Another talk by Rodriguez is scheduled on the same day at 1 p.m., in University Union, Room 220. Reservations are required for the morning event. No reservations are required in the afternoon, and both are free and open to the public.

Motivation of gang life, its resulting death and destruction, and the power of words for change are the main themes of Rodriguez’s memoir, “Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.” The book recounts his struggle out of poverty in the barrio of East L.A., breaking free from the years of violence and desperation he spent as an active gang member. Achieving success as an award-winning Chicano poet, he was sure the streets would haunt him no more – until his young son joined a gang himself. Rodriguez fought for his child by telling his own story in the memoir.

“Always Running” earned a Carl Sandburg Literary Award and was designated a New York Times Notable Book. It has also been named by the American Library Association as one of the nation’s 100 most censored books.

Rodriguez is convinced that a writer can change the world. He is known for helping start a number of prominent organizations, such as Chicago’s [Guild Complex](#), one of the largest literary arts organizations in the Midwest. In addition, he is one of the founders of the small poetry publishing house Tia Chucha Press, as well as [Tia Chucha’s Café and Centro Cultural](#) – a bookstore, coffee shop, art gallery, performance space, and workshop center in Los Angeles.

Reservations can be made by calling 756-0327, or e-mailing Liz Cofer at lcofer@calpoly.edu. Persons with disabilities may request accommodations in advance by contacting the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 805-756-1521.

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