



### \*\*\* Media Release\*\*\*

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## Comic book looks at local history and current events with attention to racial inequality

**Coachella, CA** – On Friday, Alianza Coachella Valley will unveil a new locally-produced comic book, “How Did We Get Here?”, that tells the unique story of the Coachella Valley and its people while encouraging action to address the racism and policies that created inequitable local health and living conditions.

“Plans for this comic book started before the COVID-19 pandemic, but COVID and the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 became important parts of the story we wanted to uplift,” said Sahara Huazano, director of programs at Alianza. “We are excited to share “How Did We Get Here?” and see it become an important tool for learning about our history, the diversity of the Coachella Valley, and social justice.”

The book’s story is fictional but was created with input from Coachella Valley young people. At the center is Esperanza, a young Latina from Coachella, and her peers. While going to school and organizing for a new college campus in the Coachella Valley, Esperanza must deal with traumatic family losses from COVID and fallout from participation in Black Lives Matter demonstrations. She nearly gives up, but returns to activism out of a sense of duty to her community and to honor the struggles of her immigrant grandparents.

At a time when some people in the U.S. are working to block young people from learning about historic and contemporary racism, “How Did We Get Here?” examines important aspects of local history such as the roles of Native American tribes and farmworkers, and looks directly at current polarizing issues including immigration, police brutality, and unequal access to healthcare and education for racial minorities. The book aims to spark contemplation and dialogue on these issues, even when it may be uncomfortable for some.

“How Did We Get Here?”- Coachella is part of a series of location-specific comic books made with support from The California Endowment and the Bay Area organization Urban Habitat, which created the first “How Did We Get Here” comic book in 2005. The Coachella edition was written by Jamie Soria with story support from Medjool Lizalde and contributions from members of Alianza’s Youth Organizing Council and Alianza staff. Illustrations are by Lizalde and lettering is by Angela Tannehill.

**WHAT:** “How Did We Get Here?” Comic Book Release Party; free copies will be available to attendees

**WHEN:** Friday, May 6, 2022 , 4 p.m.

**WHERE:** Coachella Library, 1500 6th St, Coachella, CA 92236

**WHO:** Event will include a panel discussion on community activism



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**About Alianza Coachella Valley**

Alianza is the only coalition of people and organizations built around resident leadership working to bring dramatic changes to the Coachella Valley. We understand that healthy and economically thriving communities exist only when people have a seat at the table for decisions that affect their daily lives. Alianza is currently working on campaigns for better schools, improving the local environment and promoting youth leadership. For more information, visit [www.alianzacv.org](http://www.alianzacv.org).