

Colombian-American Entrepreneur Launches Leadership Fellowship for Diverse Professionals Across the U.S.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- John Moreno-Escobar, a Colombian-American entrepreneur and survivor of a life-threatening brain aneurysm, has launched PODER Collective, a cutting-edge leadership fellowship designed to transform the lives of emerging leaders from diverse backgrounds across the United States.

The program, currently active in South Florida, recently graduated its first cohort of 17 fellows and plans to expand into the New York / New Jersey area later this year. PODER Collective is nomination-only and combines neuroscience-based training, personal development, and professional leadership skill-building to help underrepresented leaders break barriers in business, education, social enterprise, and civic sectors.

"Representation alone isn't enough," said John Moreno-Escobar, Chief Visionary Officer of PODER Collective. "We want to build leaders who are conscious, empathetic, and resilient—people who can lead with integrity across identities, industries, and communities."

A Diverse Founding Team

PODER Collective was co-founded by a dynamic, multicultural team:

- John Moreno-Escobar, Colombian-American, leads the vision and strategy.
- A co-founder from Mexico, who brings experience in organizational development and cross-cultural leadership.
- A co-founder from Brazil, specializing in neuroscience and emotional intelligence techniques.



This leadership trio reflects the fellowship's commitment to diversity—not just among its fellows, but at its very core.

The Backstory: Survival, Purpose, and Leadership

Moreno-Escobar's life journey underscores why he created this fellowship. Immigrating to New York City at age 18 with just \$100 in his pocket, he navigated the challenges of assimilation and self-reinvention. He rose through roles in education and nonprofit sectors, eventually building a reputation for leadership grounded in service and authenticity.

In 2021, he survived open-brain surgery after a sudden aneurysm—a brush with mortality that shifted his entire perspective. As Moreno-Escobar puts it, “When you see life through that lens, leading with purpose becomes nonnegotiable.” That epiphany crystallized his mission: to help leaders from all backgrounds step into roles of influence, grounded in values and community.

What Makes PODER Collective Different

PODER Collective distinguishes itself from conventional leadership programs in several key ways:

- Collective leadership spaces: Co-designed by co-founders Juliana Faus (Brazil) and the Mexican co-founder, these immersive experiences foster transformation through group practices, peer-to-peer coaching, and intentional vulnerability—not just lectures.

- Neuroscience-based training: Tools rooted in the science of brain and behavior help fellows understand decision-making patterns, emotional regulation, and resilience under pressure.

- Holistic development: Beyond professional growth, the curriculum attends to purpose, identity, and well-being—so fellows lead not just skillfully, but sustainably.

- Community & network access: Fellows join an ever-growing ecosystem of changemakers, gaining access to mentors, resources, and collaborative opportunities across sectors.

New Initiatives and Growing Impact

In addition to the core fellowship, PODER Collective recently launched PODER Talks, an invitation-only series of leadership conversations spotlighting voices from business, education, wellness, and social innovation. Plans are also underway for the Latino & Diverse Leadership Conference, slated for South Florida in 2026, which will bring together leaders of varied backgrounds for cross-pollination, learning, and alliance-building.

Why the Timing Is Crucial

Con debates swirling around DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) programming, many organizations have narrowed or defunded such efforts. Yet the need for transformative leadership development—especially for underrepresented groups—remains urgent. PODER Collective is not about checking off demographic boxes: it's about elevating leadership potential across diversity lines and ensuring voices historically left out have the tools, confidence, and support to lead at the highest levels.

"True equity emerges when institutions transform from within," Moreno-Escobar states. "That requires leaders who bring consciousness, courage, and connection—regardless of their background."

About PODER Collective

PODER Collective is more than a fellowship—it is a movement. Through neuroscience-based training, peer-led community, mentorship, and immersive experiences, the organization equips diverse leaders to show up boldly, influence meaningfully, and lead with integrity across sectors.

For more information, visit www.podercollective.com or follow John Moreno-Escobar on Instagram at @JohnMorenoEscobar.

Paula Henderson

VIP Media

[email us here](#)

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