

Latina-Led Nonprofit Asociación de Emprendedor@s Celebrates Growth, Milestones, and SoCal Expansion

Local program for entrepreneurs teaching invaluable lessons about how to run a business, in Spanish.

ORANGE, CA, UNITED STATES, July 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a region where monolingual Spanish-speaking communities are often excluded from traditional economic development pipelines, one woman's vision is rewriting the narrative. Monica Robles, a Latina entrepreneur, certified coach, and founder of [Asociación de Emprendedor@s](https://www.asociaciondeemprendedoras.org), is leading a movement to break down systemic barriers to business ownership through culturally and linguistically responsive entrepreneurship training.



Logo for Asociacion de Emprendedor@s

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*Monica Robles, Founder of
Asociación de
Emprendedor@s*

Since launching the nonprofit in 2016, Monica has empowered more than 1,500 aspiring entrepreneurs—primarily women—with the education, confidence, and tools needed to start and scale formal businesses. Her results are staggering: a 90–95% retention rate and over 60% of graduates going on to launch their own registered enterprises. Many participants have transitioned from informal “side hustles” into legally established businesses with access to capital and growth opportunities.

“This work is personal,” said Robles. “I’ve seen firsthand how many in our community have the talent and drive to succeed—but they lack access to education, coaching, and

a network that truly understands their experience. Asociación de Emprendedor@s was built to change that.”

Robles' professional journey includes leadership roles in the corporate sector and an Executive MBA from Instituto de Empresa Business School in Madrid, one of the world's top-ranked business institutions. Her academic and coaching credentials, combined with her deep cultural awareness, have shaped a unique program model grounded in equity, accessibility, and real-world impact.

Each cohort of Asociación de Emprendedor@s undergoes a transformative process that blends leadership development, SBA-compliant business plan training, and technical assistance—all in Spanish. Participants are taught how to craft elevator pitches, build financial projections, and navigate the complex systems of business registration and financing.

But for Robles, the change goes deeper than spreadsheets and sales. “The biggest challenge is getting someone to believe in themselves,” she says. “They start out shy and unsure. By graduation, they speak with confidence, pitch their ideas like pros, and walk away with a plan they can execute.”

A key driver of the nonprofit's recent growth has been its collaboration with [Chapman University's Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics](#). Robles works closely with Dr. Cynthia West, Director of the Leatherby Center, whose fluency in Spanish and deep understanding of the community has made her a pivotal ally.

“Dr. West and her team have been incredible champions of this work,” said Robles. “The partnership with the Leatherby Center has helped us expand our reach, strengthen our curriculum, and build bridges into new academic and entrepreneurial ecosystems.”

In the most recent cohort—held in partnership with the Leatherby Center—36 of 43 enrolled participants graduated, marking the largest class to date. The next cohort, launching in June 2025, will continue this collaboration, bringing a new group of entrepreneurs into a supportive, bilingual business training environment.



**Argyros College of
Business and Economics**
Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship
and Business Ethics

The Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship is a part of the Argyros College of Business and Economics, at Chapman University



Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics Exterior

Asociación de Emprendedor@s is funded through a combination of city, county, and state contracts, alongside grants from private foundations and financial institutions. Monica is also a recipient of a grant from the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), the same office that supports Chapman's entrepreneurial efforts—demonstrating statewide alignment in advancing inclusive economic development.

Looking ahead, the organization is preparing for a series of milestone initiatives:

Emprendedor@s Conference de Negocios – A regional, all-Spanish business conference will take place on July 11 in Anaheim, featuring inspirational speakers, workshops, and networking designed for and by Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs.

New Chapman Cohort – Launching in June 2025, this next round of training will deepen the impact of the Chapman partnership, continuing to unlock opportunities for monolingual participants often left behind in traditional incubator programs.

Imperial Valley Expansion – Thanks to support from the Latino Community Foundation, Asociación de Emprendedor@s will bring its proven model to the Imperial Valley later this year, addressing an urgent need in one of California's most underserved regions.

Robles emphasizes that her work is about more than launching businesses—it's about advancing justice, equity, and generational opportunity. "We're not just helping people start businesses," she said. "We're helping them reclaim economic power, restore dignity, and build wealth that lasts beyond one generation."

Asociación de Emprendedor@s continues to prove what's possible when culturally relevant, linguistically accessible entrepreneurship training meets visionary leadership. For Monica Robles, this is more than a mission—it's a movement.

About Asociación de Emprendedor@s

Founded in 2016 by Monica Robles, Asociación de Emprendedor@s is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to providing culturally and linguistically responsive business education and coaching to monolingual Spanish-speaking individuals, primarily women. The organization serves Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties, with expansion into Imperial Valley in 2025. To learn more, visit www.asociacionemprendedores.org (URL placeholder).

About Chapman University

Founded in 1861, Chapman University is a nationally ranked private university in Orange,

California, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles. Chapman serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, with a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Students can choose from over 100 areas of study within 11 colleges for a personalized education. Chapman is categorized by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 “high research activity” institution. Students at Chapman learn directly from distinguished world-class faculty including Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur fellows, published authors and Academy Award winners. The campus has produced a Rhodes Scholar, been named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars, and hosts a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious honor society. Chapman also includes the Harry and Diane Rinker Health Science Campus in Irvine. The university features the No. 4 film school and No. 66 business school in the U.S. Learn more about Chapman University: www.chapman.edu.

About The Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics

The vision of the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship is to inspire, educate, and empower the next generation of talent to have an entrepreneurial mindset. To teach students how to innovate and take risks, whether they are starting their own venture, or working inside a corporation. Through our curriculum and our incubator, we provide hands-on experience to the next generation of talent, teaching them how to develop, scale, and launch their own ventures as future global citizens in the world economy. Ralph W. Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics | Chapman University

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