Say Yes to Your Life: USU alumnus James Porras shares his story as part of Lunch with Latinx Leaders series

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On Wednesday, February 5, 2020, Utah State University alumnus James Garcia Porras spoke as part of the Latinx Cultural Center’s Lunch with Latinx Leaders series. For the past twenty years, Porras has found success as a Wendy’s franchisee and through his investments in property and real estate. During his presentation, Porras shared the key elements which lead him to this success: help, fear, choices, goals, plans, understanding, service and joy.

“One of the most important things that we need to learn is that you’re never gonna do it by yourself,” Porras stated, as he told a story about reaching out to a former colonel from his time in Vietnam. When Porras first received his honorable discharge from the military, he returned to Utah State to pursue his education. But he knew that in order to secure funding, he would have to ask for help—which was exactly what he did. “Everything is help. That’s the most important thing to succeed with.”

Porras went on to share his experience of overcoming a third-grade reading level to becoming one of the first Latino graduates of Utah State University, and the role fear, choices, goals and planning contributed to this achievement.

During the question and answer portion of the presentation, students asked Porras about his experience being the only Latino in his graduating class of 324 from Logan High School, and how he deals with any prejudice he may have faced. Porras’s answer? Education and service. “We’ve got to get educated, and then once you get educated, don’t just take care of yourself.”

It’s clear that Porras takes his own advice, evident by his willingness to share his story with our students, as well as his generous contributions to the Latinx Cultural Center. A trailblazer for the Latinx community in Cache Valley, Porras’s story represents the amazing things our people can accomplish when they’re given the opportunity.

To hear more about what Latinx leaders are doing in Cache Valley and at Utah State University, join us for the next installment of our lunch series. Our next lunch will be held on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the Merrill-Cazier Library, room 208. Local business owner, Rigo Chapparo, will share his story and how he overcame the challenges he faced due to his Latinx heritage.