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HITN Honors Young Filmmakers in National Middle School Contest

*Celebrating Creativity and Puerto Rican Heritage Through **Cortitos***

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Brooklyn, NY, November 3, 2025 - **HITN** continues to inspire middle school students to celebrate **Puerto Rican Heritage Month** through **Cortitos**, its national short-film competition. Presented for its third year, **HITN**'s initiative **Cortitos** encourages student creativity, storytelling, and cultural exploration. The contest invites students to write a script and produce one-minute films highlighting one of **HITN**'s five [Puerto Rican Heritage](#) honorees.

This year's winners include two standout entries from **Esperanza Academy Charter School** in Philadelphia. One was written, directed and edited by 8th grader **Alarberto Ortiz**, and the other co-written, co-directed and co-edited by 14-year-olds **Awildaliz Martinez Dejesus** and **My'Lan Baez**. A cash prize was shared between both winners.

Reflecting on his piece, **Alarberto** shared, "I made my film about **Roberto Clemente** because I really admire him as a successful baseball player. He also did a lot for the Hispanic community, something I hope I can do when I grow up."

"We chose to make this film about **Sonia Manzano** because she still became successful even if things were hard growing up. We liked the book she wrote, it was called '*Becoming Maria: Love and Chaos in the South Bronx*,'" said **Awildaliz** and **My'Lan** about their film's inspiration.

At **HITN**, competition co-founder **Luis Alejandro Molina** commended the students' creativity and dedication, noting, "Their work is truly inspiring, and we hope they continue sharing their talents with the world."

Cortitos is more than a contest—it's an educational experience that connects generations and fosters creativity, cultural awareness, and media literacy. Through hands-on activities, students explore identity, history, personal and cultural expression, and the art of filmmaking, all while honoring the legacies of influential Puerto Ricans.

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About HITN

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