

Hispanic Heritage Month: Freedom Tower In Downtown Miami Still Stands As A Beacon Of Freedom

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OCTOBER 6, 2021



<https://cbsloc.al/3mrzS18>

MIAMI (CBSMiami) – It’s known as the Ellis Island of the South and still stands as a beacon of freedom packed with decades of history and influence – the Freedom Tower.

“The Freedom Tower became that symbol of America as a welcoming place where you as a refugee flee communism, political persecution, you could find a path forward,” said Natalia Crujeiras, Executive Director of Cultural Affairs at Miami Dade College.

The tower now belongs to Miami Dade College as a space for education, but from 1962 to 1974 it was famously known as the Cuban Refugee Center after the Cuban Revolution when waves of immigrants came to South Florida.

“The building was the center where ether received medical care dental care, financial assistance, work placement food,” said Crujeiras.

During that time the tower here became a symbol of a new era in Miami – turning the city not only into a vacation destination but into an international metropolis powered by immigrants.

But after the early 70s the tower’s future was unknown.

“It was abandoned and passed form hands to hands, and it was the Cuban American community that rescued it and donated it to the college,” said Crujeiras.

Crujeiras said this landmark’s significance must be remembered.

“The idea is we want to honor and celebrate our history who we are but we want to advance the community forward like Miami Dade College does through education and empowering our students to have a better education and future,” said Crujeiras.

Today, the tower still stands for freedom.

This year it was the sight of rallies standing with Cuba as the country fights against the communist regime amid a deadly pandemic.

Learn more at: <https://miami.cbslocal.com/2021/10/06/hispanic-heritage-month-freedom-tower-miami/>