OSU to form first Midwest Hispanic children’s theater

By Matt Harvey
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State is the home of the only established Hispanic theater in the Midwest, and will soon be the home of the Midwest’s only Hispanic children’s theater, the co-director of the theater said.

The Office of Hispanic Student Programs at OSU has agreed to fund the children’s theater, said Michele Davis, co-director of Teatro Unidad.

Teatro Unidad is a troupe of 60 people from the university area. They perform plays of a “timeless nature,” Davis said.

The plays are performed in Spanish dialogue, although the troupe will perform a play in the spring that uses both Spanish and English dialogue.

Teatro Unidad performs throughout the Midwest. Davis began Teatro Unidad in January 1980 with seven members. There are 60 members in the troupe now.

Nancy Sepulveda, co-director of Teatro Unidad, said the theater helps Hispanics in the area retain their native language and culture.

Sepulveda, a Hispanic raised in Ohio, said Teatro Unidad also helps dispel stereotypes of Hispanics held by non-Hispanics.

Sepulveda said she thinks the children’s theater can accomplish the same things.

The children’s theater may begin sometime in the spring if any interest is shown, Davis said.

The children’s theater will be open to high school and elementary students from the Columbus area, Davis said.

“It will be open to any age student with a knowledge of Spanish . . . I am interested in the culture and the language,” she said.

Davis said she probably will begin sending letters to area schools at the end of January. The letters will explain the children’s theater.

Children will learn relaxation exercises, intonation and projection, Davis said.

Davis said she got the idea from responses she received from area schools she has worked with. Many area schools use Teatro Unidad as an educational tool, Davis said.

Schools bring their students to watch plays. The plays are discussed by the students both before and after the performances, Davis said.