

Noticias

A Publication of the DCFS
Latino Advisory Committee

Pat Quinn, Governor
Erwin McEwen, Director

Winter Edition, 2009



Celebrating Latino Heritage



Noticias

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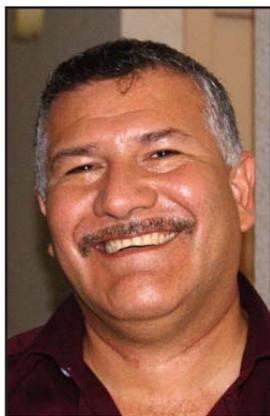
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Welcome from the Chairperson

Héctor Vázquez

To "my brothers and sisters in the struggle," a phrase borrowed from Special Assistant Deputy Daniel Fitzgerald, as we enter a new year with a new governor, the proposed lay-offs behind us, and new hope for our state, let us continue to do that which we excel at doing—advocating for one another and advocating on behalf of Spanish-speaking families and children throughout Illinois.

We must continue in our struggle and advocacy to ensure that Spanish-speaking families and children are efficiently and effectively served and have access to services that English-speaking families have, a challenge due to the scarcity of quality Spanish-language services throughout the state.

We must continue to tactfully and strategically advocate for the enhancement of Spanish-language services already in place and the creation of new Spanish-language services statewide. We must continue to work hand-in-hand with our allies in our administration that understand, are sensitive to, and support our struggles and needs.

Our Spanish-speaking families suffer a disservice when they and their cases are not served and managed by investigators, case workers, and other service providers that are able to adequately communicate with them in their language. We must continue to respectfully keep this dire need in the forefront of the minds of our administrative leadership.

The current economic state of Illinois is disheartening and challenging, but this too shall pass. Therefore, let us continue to do that which we excel at doing—advocating and serving.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to actively participate in the preparation of our next LAC Annual Latino Family Institute. We meet the third Wednesday of each month from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. You will enjoy taking part in the process of putting together the Institute that educates, challenges, and encourages our DCFS/POS staff. You can do this by being part of one or two sub-committees such as Awards, Cultural, Exhibitors, Facilitators, Hotel, Key Note Speaker, Registration Book Review, and Workshops. We meet at 2550 W. Bradley St. in Chicago. If you are unable to participate in person, you may call in to (877) 411-9748 access code: 3695832.

Cordially,

Héctor Vázquez, Chairperson
Latino Advisory Committee

Older Caregivers

Working with older caregiver families can be challenging AND rewarding. Some of the challenges include the reality that the caseworker will be working with two separate populations: the child and the older caregiver; the development of an appropriate plan and services must address the needs of both. Since change can happen more frequently and less predictably with older adults, it can be difficult to know when to act as workers will encounter a variety of situations and circumstances. Furthermore, it can be challenging to address geriatric issues when one's area of expertise is rooted in child welfare.

The US Census reported in 2000 that 1 in 12 children under the age of 18 live in a home headed by a grandparent. In Illinois over 97,000 grandparents are raising over 213,000 grandchildren.

For families involved in the child welfare system the same trends hold true, especially in kinship caregiver families. As of July 2008, over 5,700 older caregivers were caring for 10,890 children with the vast majority (9,149) of these children living in permanent homes either through adoption or subsidized guardianship. The largest numbers of these families reside in Cook County, but high numbers are also found in Champaign, DuPage, Lake, Peoria, St. Clair, Will and Winnebago counties.

What will this mean to the families and children as they move through the future together and how can the child welfare system best serve these families to ensure that the child's best interests are maintained with the, often relative, older caregivers?

Older relative caregivers can be struggling with complex feelings as they confront the need to become caregivers to the next generation of children in their family. These older caregivers have already raised at least one generation and are often not in the best financial position to assume the care of their grandchildren or even great grandchildren. They can be struggling with feelings of ambivalence, anger and shame about their new role even as they feel a sense of responsibility and love for the children who have been removed from the care of their parents. Caseworkers must be alert to these feelings and carefully consider the placement and permanency goal with the safety of both the child and the caregiver in mind.

How can child welfare professionals assess the older caregiver for permanency through adoption or subsidized guardianship?

Older caregivers may present some complex medical, financial or cognitive challenges that will relate to their ability to provide long-term care and permanency for a child. Assessments of older caregivers should include a life-span approach and focus on how older caregiver issues may affect the long-term safety, stability and well-being of the child. In addition, child welfare staff should identify extended family, assist in the creation of a back-up plan, prioritize identified needs rising out of the assessment, obtain services and follow up on the outcomes.

Assessments should be on-going and made at critical decision points such as:

- Prior to placement
- Prior to permanency recommendations
- During child and family teams meetings, and,
- When licenses are renewed or changed.

When assessments raise questions about the older caregiver's ability to care for the child long term, the child's placement and/or the viability of the back-up plan for the child, caseworkers should refer the families to family mediation (available in Cook) or staff the cases with extended family in the child and family team meetings in order to develop a long-term care plan for the child that:

- Identifies the permanency goal for the child
- Contains services and supports needed for the child's safety now and in the future
- Identifies a viable and reliable caregiver, back-up caregiver and contingency care plans

What do child welfare staff need to consider when working with older caregiver families?

- Use of a life span approach
- For the older caregiver consider the physical, emotional and cognitive capacity of the caregiver as these factors relate to the caregiver's ability to provide care for the children.
- For the child in care consider can the child achieve a lasting and secure permanency with this caregiver.
- Safety and appropriateness of the home including the caregiver's ability to han-

dle an emergency such as a fire.

- Financial viability of the caregivers to provide for themselves and the children over and above the foster care payment or subsidy.

Older caregivers are usually at the end of their income earning years, are living on a fixed income (often just Social Security), and/or lack sufficient financial resources to maintain themselves and their homes.

- Creation of a back-up plan
- Identifying extended family as the caregiver family support network

What services are there for child welfare staff who are working with older caregivers?

**For Cook County:
Child Protection Juvenile Court Mediation Program: 312-433-5259**

Serves Spanish-speaking families

Family Matters: 312-786-6000

A team of lawyers and social workers who work in child welfare, adoption and guardianship to secure legal care and custody back-up planning

Serves Spanish-speaking families

**Additional services for older caregivers:
Extended Family Support Program**

The Department and its community partners provide assistance to adults who are already caring for relative children. The children may not be abused or neglected, but social services may still be needed to stabilize the relative caregivers' household or prevent a later placement away from the relatives. An array of services—provided through collaborative efforts between DCFS, probate court, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, the State Central Register, and public schools—focus on short-term interventions to help relatives continue to provide quality care. Serves Spanish-speaking families

Illinois Department on Aging - Senior HelpLine 1-800-252-8966

Support groups, prescription drug assistance, referrals for counseling, financial and legal assistance, adult and child care, advocacy for school enrollment, special education and visitation.

Serves Spanish-speaking families

**Chicago Department of Senior Services:
312-744-4016**

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Educational Access Project for DCFS at NIU

The purpose of the NIU Educational Access Project is to provide individual educational interventions on behalf of children involved with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The project also offers educational training to caregivers, child welfare staff, school personnel and others, and supports collaboration among DCFS, schools and school districts.

DCFS has Education Advisors in each region who provide technical assistance and advocacy for a variety of educational issues such as enrollment, early childhood, literacy, school discipline, school fees, special education, truancy, dropout, and preparation for college. Eligible students are children involved with DCFS through in-tact, placement, adoption, and subsidized guardianship cases. Private agencies have Education Liaisons who provide the same support to caregivers, caseworkers and school personnel with education issues affecting the children served by the individual agency.

DCFS also has a Transition Advisor and Specialist who can assist with issues of 8th and 9th graders in the Chicago Public School system. The Transition team handles this specific population due to the correlation between students making a successful transition to high school and completing high school.

The project also provides monthly Education Liaison Meetings that often include school-focused trainings. The meetings are held at the DCFS Cook South Office at 6201 S. Emerald in Chicago the third Thursday of each month from 10:00am—12:00pm. Though the meetings include the Education Advisors and private agency Education Liaisons, all are welcome—caseworkers, caregivers, and school and court personnel.

Department staff can make a referral by contacting their regional Education Advisor, and private agency workers can contact their designated Education Liaisons. Students and families who have Spanish-language needs can contact the bilingual Education Advisor Carlos Alverio at Carolos.Alverio@illinois.gov or 773/292-7731 and/or Transition Specialist Leticia Núñez at Leticia.Nunez@illinois.gov or 773/292-7735. More information on the project and resources can be found at www.cedu.niu.edu/ccwe/eap.

Education Advisors

Cook County Regions

Cook North – Chicago

Advisor: Robena Morgan, 312-328-2477
Assistant Advisor: Donnis Briscoe, 312-328-2673

Cook Central – Chicago

Advisor: Dawn Overend, 773-292-7732
Assistant Advisor: Carlos Alverio, 773-292-7731

Cook South – Chicago

Advisor: Diane Fitzhugh, 773-371-6029
Assistant Advisor: Arlecia Brown, 773-371-6166

Education Transition Project – Cook County

Transition Advisor: James Mondala, 773-292-7720
Transition Spec.: Leticia Núñez, 773-292-7735

Cook North – Suburbs

Advisor: Yasmina Sefiane, 847-745-3008

Cook Central – Suburbs

Advisor: Yasmina Sefiane, 708-338-6637

Cook South – Suburbs

Advisor: Rebecca Lawrence, 708-210-3051
Assistant. Advisor: Jessica Ellenwood, 708-210-3053

Downstate Regions

Northern Region

Advisor: Rhonda Best, 815-967-3750
Assistant. Advisor: Lauretta Thrist, 815-967-3832

Northern Region

Advisor: Mitch Kremer, 847-249-7840

Central Region – Peoria & Champaign Subregions

Advisor: Kristal Shelvin, 309-671-7952

Central Region – Springfield Subregion

Advisor: Mary Chepulis, 217-557-3985
Advisor: Ann Wells, 217-786-6847

Southern Region

Advisor: Bessie Peabody, 618-583-2125
Assistant. Advisor: Lynette Johnson, 618-583-2125

Southern Region – Marion Subregion

Advisor: Vacant
Assistant Advisor: Lynette Johnson, 618-687-2121

Back To School

Cook Central Region received 250 book bags from Office Depot in August to distribute to Department children. Employees at the 3518 W. Division office were asked to rise to the challenge of donating \$10.00 to help purchase school supplies to fill the book bags. Members of the Site Quality Council spearheaded the effort. The payoff for the 3518 W. Division staff was a barbecue lunch of hotdogs, bratwurst, and sausages in appreciation of their donated cash, effort, and time. About \$300 was collected to purchase school supplies which supplemented donated supplies already on hand.

The book bags were filled by staff and successfully distributed to foster parents and case managers prior to the Labor Day weekend. Our children were prepared to go to school with the tools they need to learn.



Red Cross Offers Volunteer Opportunities

When Edwin Rivera signed up to take a CPR class with the Greater Chicago Red Cross, he had several motivations. As an engineer for a food processing plant in Chicago, he wanted to be ready to help his coworkers during a potential health emergency. Though he had some general knowledge of CPR, he didn't feel confident enough to use his skills if someone were to need him. Edwin took a CPR class in Spanish during the Red Cross CPR Training Days, which offers the course in English and Spanish for \$5 to hundreds of participants. Edwin said that the class made him feel more prepared. "I'm ready to help at the plant, to help my family or to help someone on the street. I've learned a lot," he said.

The American Red Cross of Greater Chicago serves the Latino community during times of disaster and helps people prepare for and prevent emergencies through Spanish-language programs. Every day the Red Cross chapter responds to an average of three to four disasters in Chicago and the suburbs, the majority of which are fires in people's homes. When a raging fire displaced dozens of people in Pilsen last August, Red Cross disaster relief workers responded with the provision of food, clothing and shelter for several victims. Mental health volunteers arrive to bring comfort and counsel, and they help refer victims to agencies for long-term care. The Red Cross relies on volunteers who give their time to cover up to 76% of

local disaster response. When fire tears through a home, often people don't know where to start the recovery process. All of the relief that the Red Cross offers is free of charge to the victims—and the compassionate work of volunteers is often a first step toward normalcy for families struggling after a disaster.

These local relief and education programs may not be familiar to some in our Latino community, but many immigrants have strong associations with the Cruz Roja emblem and societies that served them in their home countries. The Red Cross here in Chicago holds the same principles as societies throughout the Spanish-speaking world, and the Greater Chicago Chapter is reaching out to families here to familiarize them with Red Cross services. Victor Tello was a paramedic with the Red Cross in Mexico and was eager to join up with the Red Cross when he arrived in Chicago. After taking a CPR course during the CPR Training Days, he planned on becoming a CPR instructor and looked for more information on the chapter's Spanish-language website, www.cruzrojachicago.org. The chapter's Latino outreach efforts include advertising on CTA trains and buses, cultivating Spanish-speaking volunteers and providing information about Red Cross services in Spanish on the web site. The chapter has launched an awareness campaign, *Mismas Necesidades. Misma Cruz.* (Same Needs. Same

Red Cross.), and artists have been commissioned to create Red Cross murals in several Latino neighborhoods.

Red Cross safety awareness programs often happen in Latino neighborhoods and bring safety messages into these community backyards. During the *Un Sábado por la Vida* (A Saturday for Life) annual training event, the Red Cross offers child CPR classes free of charge in Spanish-speaking communities. Through the Team Firestopper educational outreach program, volunteers bring safety seminars and home visits to fire-prone areas such as Pilsen, Humboldt Park and Aurora. Team Firestopper volunteers visit homes and talk to families about safety hazards such as open heating elements and frayed cords. The volunteers give families a disaster preparedness kit and other products and information to become better prepared for emergencies.

To learn more about Red Cross services or volunteering, call (312) 729-6100 or visit www.chicagoredcross.org or www.cuzrojachicago.org.

Latino Heritage Celebration

Cook North Region

By Iris Cuevas

Cook North region celebrated its fifth annual Latino Heritage luncheon as part of "Hispanic Heritage Month" at 2550 W. Bradley Place on October 3, 2008. This year we faced some ambivalence from staff due to the then-pending layoffs. We, however, decided that we needed to continue this tradition of sharing a part of our culture with our co-workers. As in previous years, we received full support from our co-workers as well as the administration at Cook North.

Flags and artifacts from Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Peru were proudly set up by Latino staff on the display tables. The room was decorated with colorful table cloths and streamers to represent our vibrant cultures. With music playing in the background, the room was soon full of the wonderful aroma of our traditional foods. Our menu included fajitas, arroz con gandules, arroz con pollo, tamales, empanadas, roasted pork, bacalao (cod fish), Peruvian potatoes, black beans, ox tails, refried beans, chicken, and flan and other desserts. The program consisted of Latino facts, Latino trivia and poetry readings by Denise Alvarez and Sulma Garcia-Mora.

There were an estimated sixty participants from the three Cook North sites and a few former Cook North staff who came back to celebrate with us. Our goal was that everyone who attended would learn something new about our culture, our music, our food and/or our people. Our yearly celebration gives us Latinos at Cook North an opportunity to work together, forget our differences, embrace our similarities and celebrate our great Latino culture.





Meeting With The Director

This past August the Latino Advisory Committee (LAC) met with Director McEwen to discuss concerns regarding bilingual workers and services to Latino clients. Among the items discussed was bilingual staffing at Aunt Martha's Shelter, Rutan Certification of bilingual PSAs, and providing a forum for Latino youth to express their needs to the Department. Director McEwen also expressed his support of activities around Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month.

Director McEwen informed the committee of the \$100,000 grant awarded to the Back of the Yards community to support a resi-

dential and alternative school to youth. The Director stated that he would be interested in finding out about more community family groups that are providing support to keeping families together.

LAC will be meeting with the Director again in the near future.

The Focus Is On You

**Carol Kline, Child Welfare Specialist
DCFS Foster Care Licensing, Cook Central**

In every issue of Noticias we focus on a different Spanish-speaking bilingual employee. In this issue we would like to introduce Noticias editor and foster care licensing worker Carol Kline. If you know of someone we should highlight, please send an e-mail to Julia Camacho de Monzon.

Where are you from? I was born and raised in Evanston, IL. My father, who comes from English and Scottish heritage, was teaching English in Honduras and El Salvador in the late 1950s when he met my Salvadorean mother. He eventually returned to the U.S. to teach Spanish and later brought my mother and my oldest brother and sister to join him.

School Degrees: I have a Bachelor of Science degree from Northwestern University in Communication Studies. I completed my Master of Arts degree in Writing in June 2008 at DePaul University.

How long have you been in Child Welfare? My first day of child welfare work was the day I started working for DCFS in 1992. I was hired as a Social Services Career Trainee and as part of a group of hires that was exclusively Bilingual/Option 7 workers.

Why did you become a Child Welfare Worker? My parents raised me and my siblings to appreciate how fortunate we were to lead the lives we had, especially after we were exposed to the dire poverty through-

out Central America and Mexico during family travels. I was also deeply affected by the trend of blatant homelessness that was occurring here in the U.S. in the 1980s. I had a keen interest in sociological concerns and felt that I wanted to do something to help others.

Challenges I face: As a foster care licensing worker, the reality is that we do not have enough bilingual and/or bicultural homes for Latino children and youth. Recruitment and retention of quality homes that can be good matches for our children seems insurmountable at times.

Helpful advice for staff: I believe that each of us should give a definite 100% to our work. But at the same time, you have to learn to prioritize yourself and your needs. You can't work to your potential if you aren't taking good care of yourself and relaxing and enjoying life outside of work.

Any key moments in my career?: I have had many, but I appreciate the moments when I realize that I naively overlooked something or have just learned something new. It helps keep me on my toes.

Quotes: Experience is that marvelous thing that enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again. –Franklin P. Jones



Carol Kline

Anything Else You Want to Add? Our work can be gratifying. Sometimes you have to weed out the drudgery in order to see the good and appreciate the positive impact we have on the lives of others.

Welcoming Day



Jose Lopez (right), chief of the Office of Latino Services, greets participants at the Illinois Welcoming Day in Rockford.

The Governor's Office of New Americans in conjunction with La Voz Latina and the Latino Leadership Council of Rockford held an Illinois Welcoming Day on September 27, 2008, at La Voz Latina's premises in Rockford. The event was an invitation to all the new immigrants in Winnebago and Boone Counties to come and see what services are available in an effort to assimilate them into the community.

Some of the state agencies represented included the departments of Human Services, Aging, Children and Family Services, Public Health, Healthcare and Family Services, and Employment Security. DFCS provided numerous brochures on parents' rights and information on day care and foster home licensing. Jose J. Lopez of the DCFS Office of Latino Services proved to be quite engaging with the folks that came by to look at the Department's information. He readily gave out information on foster homes and literature for parents on

preparing children to be left at home alone. Also available were clinics for HIV testing, diabetes testing, hard of hearing services, a dental clinic and dozens of other organizations and agencies from the community. The Mexican Consulate's Mobile Unit was kept busy assisting families during the entire event. The initial count is that over a thousand individuals attended, enjoyed the musical and dance events, and gained a lot of knowledge from all the vendors who participated.

The Governor's Office of New Americans opened an Immigrant Welcoming Center in Melrose Park in the past year and has been scheduling Illinois Welcoming Day events in other Latino/immigrant locales in the state as part of their outreach to immigrant communities.



Latino Advisory Committee

Executive Committee

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Evelyn Martinez, Chair Elect
Maria Calderon, Post Chair
Beatriz Ramirez, Scribe

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Luís Barrios
Joseph Becerra
Julia Camacho de Monzón
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Madeline González-García
Kenneth Martin-Ocasio
Miriam Mojica
Jasmine Molina
Dora Maya
Asela Paredes
Dhalia Roman

Ex-Oficio Members

Jose Lopez
Lourdes Rodriguez

The Latino consortium

In the mid 1990s a group of eight Chicago not-for-profit private agencies under contract with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to provide child welfare services to Latino children and their families came together to develop a consortium of agencies whose primary interest was to improve the services for Latino families in Cook County.

The Consortium currently has a membership of 13 agencies throughout Illinois. In its initiative to recruit Spanish-speaking foster parents the Consortium developed a quarterly electronic newsletter to provide updated information to child welfare licensing staff to assist with recruitment efforts. Information provided in the newsletter can also be useful to other child welfare staff. The newsletter was developed as a tool for licensing staff to share their experiences and expand their knowledge related to engaging Latino families.

Highlights in the newsletters include: Consortium News; Community Events; Engagement of Latino Families; and other pertinent information concerning the Latino community and challenges faced by both families and community organizations. If you would like to be added to our listserv to receive an electronic copy of the quarterly newsletter please email Elizabeth Arroyo at Elizabeth.arroyo@latinoconsortium.org or visit our website at www.latinoconsortium.org.

Older Caregivers

A | I | Continued from page 3

serv-ices are available to any grandparent over age 60 raising grandchildren regardless of language. Any Grandparent over age 55 who is raising grandchildren can access specialized programs such as counseling, advocacy, information and referrals. Spanish-speaking Caregiver support group meets twice a month. Serves Spanish-speaking families

Illinois Department of Public Health:

1-800-526-4372

Spanish speaking, Cook County: 312-814-5278

Spanish speaking, downstate: 217-557-2556

Illinois Department of Human Services:

1-800-843-6154

Financial assistance, medical card, child care, food stamps, information and referral, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Serves Spanish-speaking families

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services:

All Kids: 1-866-255-5437

Child Support: 1-800-447-4278

Serves Spanish-speaking families

Illinois State Board of Education:

1-866-262-6663

Limited assistance for Spanish-speaking families

Additional resources

DCFS has partnered with state and private agencies in the Aging Network to provide linkage to services, resources and assessments of older caregivers. Throughout the state of Illinois there are 13 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) that contract with local providers to assist older caregiver and relative caregiver families. Workers who need to partner with regional older caregiver service providers can contact their regional Caregiver Specialist by calling the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or by calling Barb Schwartz, Coordinator for the Grandparents raising Grandchildren program at the Illinois Department on Aging at 217-524-5327, or by contacting them directly at the Area Agency on Aging:

Suburban Cook County:

Age Options, Inc.: 708-383-0258

Sarah Stein, Caregiver Specialist

Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago Counties:

Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging

815-226-4901, Teresa Colvin, Caregiver Specialist

DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Lake, McHenry

and Will Counties:

Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging
630-293-5990

Donna Copeland Hill, Caregiver Specialist

Bureau, Henderson, Henry, Knox, LaSalle, McDonough, Mercer, Putnam, Rock Island, and Warren Counties:

Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging

309-793-6800, Deb Castillo, Caregiver Specialist

Fulton, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford Counties

Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging: 309-674-2071

Cathi Sipes, Caregiver Specialist

Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby and Vermillion Counties:

East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging:

309-829-2065; Susan Real, Caregiver Specialist

Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Hancock, Pike, and Schuyler Counties:

West Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging

217-223-7904, Todd Shackelford, Caregiver Specialist

Cass, Christian, Greene, Jersey, Logan, Macoupin, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon and Scott Counties:

Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland, Inc.

217-787-9234, Deb Deopere, Caregiver Specialist

Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington Counties:

Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois

618-222-2561, Ruth Waeltz, Caregiver Specialist

Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jefferson and Marion Counties:

Midland Area Agency on Aging

618-532-1853 Tracy Barczweski, Caregiver Specialist

Crawford, Edwards, Hamilton, Jasper, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne and White Counties:

Southeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging

618-262-2306, Rita Thacker, Caregiver Specialist

Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union and Williamson Counties:

Egyptian Area Agency on Aging

618-985-831, John Smith, Executive Director

United Way Latino Initiative

Since 2007, United Way has taken on an initiative called Latino Initiative: Changing the lives of young Latinos. They did so because of the challenges Latino youth continue to encounter. The following statistics are provided in their pamphlet detailing this initiative:



- the number of Latino teens graduating from

high school is only 53%

- they make up 22% of the drop out rate while being 18% of the student population,
- their pregnancy rates is 15% demonstrating a small declines
- by 2020, one in four American chil-

dren will be Latino

The initiative recognizes the struggle that Latino teens continue to face as they attempt to function in two cultures. The Latino Initiative was started to provide the Latino youth with the right tools to aid them in successfully reaching adulthood and functioning as productive citizens in our society. As productive citizens, Latino youth can accomplish the American dream for themselves and their families

United Way's initiative is attempting to meet the needs of Latino Youth by raising awareness of these issues and seeking input from key community stake holders. United Way's objectives are to ensure that youth stay in school, that linkage occurs between

the two cultures and to deal with "healthy families and social roles." The lead agencies involved in this initiative are Organization of the North East in Rogers Park, Metropolitan Family Services in Belmont Cragin, Hermosa, Irving Park and Portage Park, and Cicero Youth Task Force in Cicero.

For information on the United Way Latino Initiative, please contact cjones@uw-mc.org or call 312/906-2302.

Information taken from "The United Way Latino Initiative" pamphlet.

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Office of Latino Services 2009 Calendar of Events

April 18 Chicago
Day of the Child/Día del Niño
UIC Pavilion
National Museum of Mexican Art

April 23 Chicago
4th Annual Healthy Families, Healthy Communities
4248 W. 47th Street
The United Neighborhood Organization

April 25 Aurora
Salud para la Mujer/Latina Health Festival
150 W. Illinois Ave
Prisco Community Center

April 25 Chicago
Day of the Child/Día del Niño Children's Parade
1824 S. Wood St.
Mexican Administrators for Education

April 29 - 1 Springfield
Annual IAMG Conference
Hilton
Illinois Association of Minorities in Government

May 3 Chicago
Cinco De Mayo Mexican Parade
Cermak and Wood
18th St Chamber of Commerce

May 14-15 Springfield
Illinois Association of Agencies and Community
Crown Plaza

Organizations on Migrant Affairs Annual Conference

May 27 Chicago
26th Annual Career Conference
McCormick Place
Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement (HACE)

June 17-20 Chicago
Puerto Rican Humboldt Park Festival
California & Division Street
Puerto Rican Parade Committee

June 20 Chicago
Puerto Rican Parade
Columbus Drive
Puerto Rican Parade

July 25-28 Chicago
NCLR National Conference
McCormick Place West
National Council de la RAZA

July 30-Aug 2 Chicago
Fiesta del Sol Festival – Pilsen Community
Cermak & Racine
Pilsen Neighbors Community Council

August 5-6 Chicago
2009 Hispanic Business Expo
Navy Pier
Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

August 29-30 Chicago

21st Annual Viva Chicago Latin Music Festival
Grant Park
Chicago Festival

Sept 6 Chicago
Fiesta Boricua
Division Street
Puerto Rican Culture Center

Sept 12 Chicago
Mexican Independence Day Parade (Downtown)
Columbus Drive
Mexican Civic Society

Sept 12 Chicago
Pilsen Mexican Independence Day Parade
18th Street and Newberry
Pilsen Chamber of Commerce

Sept 13 Chicago
Mexican Festival (26th Street)
26th Street & Sacramento
Little Village Chamber of Commerce

Sept 13 Chicago
South Chicago Mexican Independence Day Parade
Commercial and 87th St.

Mexican Civic Society

Sept 25 Chicago
22nd Annual IAHS Conference
Mart Holiday Inn
Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees

Noticias is brought to you by the Office of Latino Services and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. It is distributed to DCFS employees, POS agencies, and agencies affiliated with DCFS. The newsletter includes articles pertinent to child welfare, Latino welfare issues, and DCFS/POS programs, and strives to be an informative source for staff by providing updates on new child welfare initiatives as well as upcoming events. It is our hope to continue providing staff with a vehicle for the sharing of information. In this endeavor, we are looking for your input, submission of articles, and suggestions for improving Noticias. Articles related to your experiences with families and personal stories are also greatly appreciated. Please submit articles, information

about upcoming events or news to:

Julia Camacho de Monzon
LAC Newsletter Chairperson
DCFS
1240 S Damen Ave
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If you would like more information or would like to participate in one of the LAC subcommittees, contact Maria Calderon at Maria.Calderon@illinois.gov.



Latino Advisory Committee

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