Engaging Latino Families: Program Models and Emerging Practices for Success

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I. Quick Agency Overview: Latino Center of the Midlands
II. Pathways to Success Program
III. Addressing Absenteeism Through Engagement
IV. Joven Noble: Culturally Based Programming for Youth
V. Cara Y Corazon: A Family Strengthening Model
VI. Program Replication
VII. Resources
Latino Center of the Midlands

Mission

To promote the self-sufficiency and self-determination of Heartland Latino families and community by providing bilingual, high quality social, educational, economic, and advocacy services.
Latino Center of the Midlands

History

The Latino Center of the Midlands, formerly known as the Chicano Awareness Center (CAC), was organized in 1971.

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45 years serving the Omaha metro area

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Agency focus has always been education and advocacy for increased educational opportunities and self sufficiency for Latinos

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In 2015, served 2,228 clients
The agency fulfills its mission by providing services in three departmental areas:

1) Adult Basic Education Program
2) Pathways to Success Program
3) Community Services and Technical Assistance Program
Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program

**Efforts are focused in two targeted service areas:**
1. Provide adult basic education programs
2. Work in partnership with other institutions to further educational goals of the student

- **Literacy (Elementary School)**
- **Pre-GED (Middle School)**
- **GED (High School)**

Enroll at MCC or other vocational training programs

**Computer Literacy**
- Windows (Basic)
- Internet
- Office Word

**ESL**
- Level 1 (Foundational)
- Level 2 (Side by Side)

Enroll at MCC Express (Higher level ESL)
Efforts are focused in three targeted service areas:

1. Social Service Navigation & Basic Needs Referrals
   - Completing applications, forms, and making calls to assist clients in accessing programs & services
   - Assistance with Employment Matters (online applications, resume development, Unemployment benefits)
   - Basic Needs Referrals (Pantry, Utility Assistance, Housing)

2. Immigration and Legal Services Navigation
   - On-site technical support from staff in completing forms, applications, and accessing documentation
   - Pro bono legal advice through consultations with Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON)-Nebraska
   - U.S. Citizenship classes & tutorials

3. Financial Stability
   - On-site tax preparation services to help clients identify tax credit savings and tax refunds
   - Extend financial literacy education to tax preparation clients
   - Connect clients to agency and community resources to improve financial
Pathways to Success (P2S) Program

2 PROGRAMS

Joven Noble/“Noble Youth” Program

National Compadres Network
Evidence-based rites of passage leadership model

Building Bright Futures Initiative
Program model aimed to reduce truancy

School-Based Attendance Program
School Engagement

Impacting School Engagement

- Enhanced Community Capacity
- Attendance
- School Success
- Attachment
- Achievement
- Quality Programs
- Increased Family Involvement
School-Based Attendance Program

Bryan & South High Schools

- Highest Free/Reduced Lunch Rates in the district (80% & 85%)
- Highest Average Absenteeism rates in the district
- Highest concentration of Latino students in the district
- Most parents require bilingual services

Bellevue West

- Latino students fastest growing population in BPS district
- Lack of resources for bilingual families: 2 dedicated bilingual staff for 1,000 student Latino population

Increased school resources for addressing truancy

(3) Metro High Schools:
- Bryan High
- Bellevue West
- South High

Client Profile
Missed between 10-19 days
90% Hispanic
50+% Single Parent Female Headed Households
60% Female/40% Male
Why focus on attendance?

Chronic absenteeism is found to be one of the strongest predictors of dropping out of high school — stronger even than suspensions and test scores.

_The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation’s Public Schools._ (Byrnes & Reyna, 2012).
The Effects of Not Graduating High School

- Higher Unemployment Rates
- Less Pay
- Greater Need for Assistance
- Greater Chance for Incarceration
- Economic Loss

Leonor Crossley, Demand Media; references: U.S. Dept of Labor, National Dropout Prevention Center, Donnell Kay Foundation
School-Based Attendance Program

NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR HEALTH IDENTIFIED
5 CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE
TRUANCY PROGRAMMING:

- Parent/Guardian Involvement
- A continuum of services, to include meaningful incentives
- Collaboration with community resources
- School administrative support
- Ongoing evaluation

“Truancy Intervention Programs: Challenges and Innovations to Implementation”, National Institutes of Health, 2009
School-Based Attendance Program

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS:

THREE CORE PROGRAM STRATEGIES

1. INDIVIDUALIZED CASE MANAGEMENT
2. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
3. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
School-Based Attendance Program

(Full-time Student Advocates)

Individualized Case Management

- On-site support to monitor grades, attendance, credits
- Address attendance challenges & create action plans to remove barriers
- Goal Setting
- Referrals to school & community resources
- Advocate in school meetings (IEP, SAT)
School-Based Attendance Program

- Monthly Lunch and Learn Sessions
- Quarterly Engagement Activities in the Community
- "Attendance Cup" Challenge
- Gallup Strengths Finder Assessment
- Student Ambassador Leadership Role
- Summer Workshops and Field Trips

Student Engagement & Life Skills Development
School-Based Attendance Program

Parental Involvement

- Family Night Events
- Ongoing contact via phone calls, family meetings
- Provide support and community resources to families of participants
- Facilitate communication between parents, students and school officials
- NEW – Addition of Family Strengthening Coach to work with parents of P2S participants
School-Based Attendance Program

The “End Goal” of the Program

- Students will **improve school attendance rates** as a result of monitoring, on-site support and access to resources.

- Students will earn the **credits** needed to stay on track for graduation.

- Parents will report improved **engagement** with their children’s education and support their post-secondary goals.
I. IMPROVED ATTENDANCE:
- 50% of P2S students in 2014-15 school year improved their attendance an average of 40% over the previous year

II. ON-TIME GRADUATION RATES:
- In the 2014-15 school year 23 of 24 seniors graduated on time, a 96% success rate

III. POST SECONDARY PLANS:
- Of the 23 graduating seniors, 74% went on to enroll in a post-secondary institution (2 or 4 year college or university), vocational school, or enlisted in the military

IV. YOUTH AND PARENT SATISFACTION: Yearend Student & Parent Survey Results: (2014-15)
* 95% of students agreed that their Student Advocate helped them to understand why it is important to attend school.
* 85% of students agreed that their Student Advocate connected them with resources they needed to be successful at school.
* 96% of students agreed that their Student Advocate was easy to connect with and talk to.
* 92% of parents agreed that the engagement with his/her child's life at school is stronger because of the P2S program
Video: Attendance Program – South High
Questions?
The **National Compadres Network** is a national effort whose focus is the reinforcement of the positive involvement of Latino males in the lives of their families, communities, and society.
NCN Programs

Efforts are focused on the healing, developing and reinforcing of Latino boys and men based through the development of “circulos” (extended kinship networks).

The Joven Noble/“Noble Youth” Model was implemented at the Latino Center of the Midlands in 2013.
Joven Noble: A Safe Space for Youth
Joven Noble Program

Joven Noble

The Joven Noble program provides life skills, cultural identity, and leadership development for youth, ages 14 to 19.

Based on philosophy that youth need other men and women, their family, and community to care for, assist, heal, and guide them, and successfully prepare them for transition into adulthood.

Young Women’s Group

2 Sites:
Bryan High School
Latino Center of the Midlands

Young Men’s Group

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5 Sites:
Bryan High School
South High School
Bellevue East High School
Bellevue West High School
Latino Center of the Midlands

Referral Sources: Juvenile Diversion, Juvenile Probation, School Administrators & Counselors, Parent/guardian, peers
Joven Noble Program

They keep their word. They do not do anything to hurt others. They take responsibility for their actions. They are a positive example to others.
Joven Noble Program

10 Curriculum Topics:

INTRO: Conocimiento / “Acknowlegment”
Defining Palabra/ “Being a person of your word”
Defining Manhood/ Womanhood
Identity
Healthy Relationships
Anger Management
Pregnancy Prevention
STI (Sexually Transmitted Infections) Prevention
Substance Abuse Prevention
Violence Prevention
Goal Setting/Decision Making

CONCLUSION: Graduation Ceremony
Video: Joven Noble Program: A Facilitator’s Perspective
The Joven Noble model is the only evidence-based and culturally-based curriculum intervention in the Omaha metro area.

**Training**
- Certified facilitators
- Trauma informed approach
- Ongoing technical assistance from the National Compadres Network

**Implementation**
- Evidence-based model with curriculum
- Youth receive and practice behavioral-focused teachings and life skills development
- Groups intentionally small in size (no more than 12)

**Evaluation**
- Use pre and post-test assessments that measure changes in:
  - Interpersonal relationships
  - Defining a person of “palabra”
  - Risky behaviors in past 30 days
  - School bonding
  - Family bonding
  - Self-control
  - Self-efficacy
  - Attitude towards drugs and alcohol
I. Access to quality, culturally based programs:

- 54% increase in youth served in Joven Noble program in 2015 over 2014
- Expanded program to add young women’s group, Xochikalli in 2015 at Bryan High School and summer sessions at Latino Center of the Midlands
- Introduced a school-based model serving young men at Bryan, South, Bellevue West, and Bellevue East High Schools

II. Program Successes

- 37 program graduations in 2015; 15 more pending in 2016
- 76% completion rate with Diversion youth referred from the Juvenile Assessment Center
- Pre & Post Test Assessments found consistent improvement amongst graduates in reducing risky behaviors, improved perceptions in family bonding, and improved self efficacy.
Questions?
Why focus on parental engagement?

It key strategy of the P2S program because it gets to the heart of engaging adults who want their children to succeed but often times do not know how to best support those efforts.
Cara Y Corazón is a family strengthening, leadership development program that maintains that at the base of every culture, community, family and parent are the resiliency factors that can be tapped to assist parents and family members to build positive, healthy relationships with their children and themselves.
Family Strengthening Program v. Parenting Class

The program acknowledges and builds on the cultural integrity of the parents’ background while guiding them to become part of an extended kinship network to collectively support one another as they raise their children.

The program directly addresses a wide variety of “cargas” baggage issues that families face to include, teen pregnancy, domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse, mental health issues, gang violence and other challenges.
Video: East Salinas, CA: Using CulturallyBasedPrograms to Heal
Resources

Joven Noble & Cara Y Corazon Training & Curriculum
- National Compadres Network
  - http://www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com

- Attendance/Engagement Models and Resources
  - Check and Connect http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/
  - Attendance Works http://www.attendanceworks.org/

- Latino Center of the Midlands – Pathways to Success Program
  - Melissa Mayo, Program & Evaluation Director
    - mmayo@latinocenterofthemidlands.org
  - Mahatma Largaespada, Student Advocate & Joven Noble Facilitator
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