

District Resource Management Report
Reaching Out to Our Latino Neighbors - 2006
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Family Living

The Nuestra Familia (means Our Family) Home & Community Education (HCE) Club was established to reach out to Latinos. As a result of this project, the Nuestra Familia Club participated in nearly all programs, projects, and business meetings of the organization. The project proposal outcomes were accomplished as follows: Best practices for bridging language and culture were identified, Nuestra Familia members continue to participate in HCE as members, and Nuestra Familia members participate in UWEX and HCE educational programs on an ongoing basis.

Inputs:

The Kewaunee County Home & Community Education Association (KCHCE) took an active role to make the project successful and worked with me as an advisor. The HCE member worker contacted the translator for each and every program to explain it. For each event that members attended a translator was available. This took a lot of organization, but it proved to be an effective way to reach out to these new members and engage them in the HCE program. The HCE member worker attended all of the club meetings with a translator. The ongoing contact/participation built the relationship amongst the women. The HCE Creed was translated by the state association. In addition, the program titles were translated for the monthly newsletter and the program booklet. As family living educator, I provided technical assistance, specifically planning with the HCE member worker, and providing advice to successfully manage issues related to the language barrier and differences in culture.

The Nuestra Familia HCE Club did not fully start with this proposal, but rather got its roots in the Fiesta Primavera event that was funded by District Resource Management (DRM) funds in 2003. (A DRM report and a success story were submitted.) Following the Fiesta Primavera, the KCHCE organized an Ethnic Potluck, a food celebration, with Latino women, where everyone (55 people) introduced themselves one by one. This was the topic of a 2004 success story. Several months later, KCHCE conducted the Fall Fun Fest, an introductory event for new members, and invited the Latino women. All these events built the foundation for the establishment of the Nuestra Familia HCE Club.

Findings:

- Latino women typically bring their children to educational programs/projects because they are primarily responsible for their care.
- Latino families appreciate events where the whole family can participate.
- Without language, nonverbal communication is the primary mode of communication. Interacting in a warm and welcoming fashion, with or without a translator is essential. Latino and English speakers initially feel awkward in communicating without language, however the comfort level improves once the relationship is built.
- For understanding/full participation in educational programs, a translator is essential.
- Working effectively with a translator, for example pausing for translation to occur, and reviewing information with the translator prior to the program, help to insure the event is successful.
- Listening to programs/discussions in English and Spanish at the same time can be distracting, but members adjust and accommodate this.

- The concept of a club and officers is a new experience for Latino women.

Best practices:

- Ongoing outreach to Latino women via the translator to inform and invite them to programs is critical. Providing a translator for programs is essential.
- Training HCE members to work with a translator helps to insure successful events.
- Building relationships is the foundation of acceptance. Developing sensitivity about nonverbal communication is a major step in relationship building. Planning informal events where there is opportunity to have fun and mingle aides in relationship building. In addition, family events provide more opportunities to accomplish this.

Unexpected Outcomes:

- There was an increased awareness of the need for a literacy program. UW-Extension provided leadership for the development of the Literacy Partners of Kewaunee County Inc., a non-profit organization. A relative success story was submitted in the 2005 reporting system.
- Several HCE members became trained tutors in the literacy program and were matched with the Latino HCE members. All Latino HCE members became students in the literacy program.

Summary:

2007 marks the third year of the Nuestra Familia HCE Club. The formation of this club enabled HCE members from both cultures to discover common concerns that transcend the language barrier, and they experienced a deeper appreciation of how alike we are as people. Through this effort our Latino neighbors became more integrated into the community, and are connected with the education of UW-Extension by way of KCHCE. This outreach project can be replicated by others, provided there is a commitment to the basic tenets of relationship building followed by accommodative organizational efforts.

District Resource Management funds enabled the idea of a Latino HCE Club to become a reality. This project helped to stimulate the early discussions of a literacy program in Kewaunee County. The literacy program that resulted has the potential for enormous benefits to Kewaunee County citizens and the community.

Agriculture

Assisting Cows with Calving, Calf Management Skills, Fresh Cow Exams, and Milking Systems training, a total of seven programs were conducted for Latino Dairy Workers. Sixty Latinos attended the programs (numbers may be duplicated). Pre and posttest evaluations were conducted at the end of programs. Completed evaluations showed that participants rated knowledge gained after attending the programs as high. Evaluation results are available on request.

Dairy Workers' Training Educational Materials for employers to continue employee training at work sites were provided with this funding.

Community Development

The evaluation of the educational, informational, technical, and legal needs of existing and emerging Latino entrepreneurs in Door and Kewaunee Counties was not accomplished. This remains a need.