

**Mexico Report
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Why did I participate?

In Milwaukee County, the Latino population is the fastest growing population, and the numbers are continuing to increase. I participated in the 2007 Mexico Immersion trip because I wanted to learn firsthand about the culture itself. Attending this program would allow me to gain hands-on experience and information which would assist me in better serving the Latino community. As an educator, I believe it is extremely important to find out from a community what they feel their needs are and then begin to see how our agency can better serve those needs.

What did I learn?

I learned so much from participating in this program, both professionally and personally. The highlight of the trip for me is when we attended a family-owned weaving and sewing shop. I enjoyed the fact that it was a family business. I believe that family is very much valued in the Mexican culture, and it reminded me a lot of my own family. Although the family did not have a lot of material gain, they were very proud of the fact that they were making uniforms for children to wear to school. At that moment, I realized how important families and entrepreneurship are. This family was able to provide for themselves because of a start-up loan they were given from the government. Because of this loan, a family dream came true. This was a very proud moment for this family, and I was glad I was able to see their business and how much it meant to them that we had chosen to visit their business. It made me feel extremely grateful for my own family.

What will I do with my new knowledge?

Since participating in the Mexico Immersion Trip, I have gained a vast amount of information and knowledge about the Mexican culture. I will use this information to educate others and to directly apply what I have learned to meet the needs of Mexicans in Milwaukee County. I will share with my county staff, nutrition education staff, and the Quad county staff what I learned in Mexico. I am hoping this will result in our county making a collective effort to work more closely with Latino communities as a whole. I would like to do some collaboration projects with other departments within Milwaukee County. I feel there is a need for more collaboration with 4-H and horticulture, to see if there is a way we can do some cross-programming within Latino communities in Milwaukee County.