

News from the Latino Community

Building Pathways to College Graduation for Hispanics

“Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish; and you have fed him for a lifetime”

There is probably no better phrase than this one to show the importance and power of Education! Education is definitely the most important basis for a lifelong success!

USA is proud of its education system, having the best universities in the world, and as a result having the most Nobel prize winners in the world. But are all segments of the US society equally taking advantage of the education system, and equally represented at the college-educated population?

The data suggests that this is not the case, especially for the Latino population. In January 2003 the Census Bureau released data showing that Hispanic Americans are the largest minority group in the nation (currently more than 41 million). Unfortunately, the Presidential Advisory Commission, which submitted to the President in March 2003 a document “From Risk to Opportunity”, found that the nation is losing Hispanic American students all along the education continuum:

- One of every three Hispanic American students fails to complete high school.
- Only 10 percent of Hispanic Americans graduate from four-year colleges and universities, with fewer than 100,000 graduating each year.
- Too many Hispanic American families lack the knowledge to fulfill the high expectations they have for their children, and too many Americans set low expectations for them.

As a result of poor education, many Latinos find themselves stuck in low-wage jobs with few opportunities for advancement.

“The Hispanic education deficit is not going to improve unless we can have help,” said Mexico native Martha Chavez, a director at the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, a national organization supporting Hispanic higher education, who participated in Latino Pathways Workshop at NKU in April 2005.

Several companies and organizations in Cincinnati and Tri-State recognized the need to help the Hispanic community.



Tony Simms (Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs), Neil Comber (2005 HSF Gala Chair), Jose Guerra (NSHMB)

Some of the early leaders in the Cincinnati area were P&G and GE. In 2002 GE Aircraft Engines Hispanic Forum and P&G Hispanic Steering Team employees decided it was time to bring their companies’ long-standing partnership with HSF (Hispanic Scholarship Fund) closer to home by organizing a HSF Gala fundraiser. In 2003, the Gala planning committee was expanded to include a number of organizations that champion the local HSF initiative and are committed to supporting this growing segment of our community.

The 2005 HSF initiative raised over \$200,000 in scholarships to benefit more than 50 local students.

Dr. James Votruba, President of Northern Kentucky University, was the 2005

gala’s featured speaker. Northern Kentucky University has long been an active supporter of students of Hispanic decent. It is a charter member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU), and in April 2005 it hosted the first in a series of workshops titled **Latino Pathways** with the goal to bring educators and community and business leaders together to better understand and meet the needs of our growing Latino community to strengthen the Greater Cincinnati Area.



Clarissa Rosas (St. Joseph College), James Votruba (NKU President), Michael Beck (MidwestLatino), Sister Margarita Brewer (CPS) at Latino Pathways Workshop

P&G continues to be a very strong supporter of various education programs. To date, P&G has contributed more than \$1.8 million to HSF in support of its commitment to help educate future Hispanic leaders.



LULAC Cincinnati

The focus of recently created local chapter of LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) in Cincinnati is to promote education among the Latino community. The first step is to create a map of available resources for Hispanic children in the Tri-State area as they progress through their education. Basically, to take a 3-5 years old child, and then map year by year, as she grows, the available resources to her, so she has a clear path on how to get to college and can take full advantage of those resources. The second step will be to identify gaps and then work with the community to close them,

It is hard to expect increased college education rates, if we don’t have enough Hispanics graduating from High Schools. And in order to change that, we have to start at a very early age.

Available scientific evidence suggests that the early childhood years provide possibly the best window of opportunity for improving the academic trajectories of Hispanic youngsters. This conclusion reflects evidence that high quality preschools can improve the school readiness of many children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. It also reflects growing evidence that some approaches to improving K-3 education can provide valuable academic achievement benefits for disadvantaged youngsters, and that high quality programs for infants and toddlers can provide significant readiness benefits as well. These are very important findings for Hispanics, because a substantial percentage of Hispanic children are from economically and educationally disadvantaged circumstances (and many also are English language learners).

Knowing English is the single most important enabler to be successful in school for children of immigrants. Cincinnati Public Schools with its Superintendent Rosa Blackwell, are aware of this and are striving to support the Latino children, especially through its ESL (English as a Second Language)

Program, coordinated by Sister Margarita Brewer.



Tony Simms (OCHLA), Maria Lang, Rosa Blackwell (Superintendent of Cincinnati Public Schools), Sister Margarita Brewer, Principal Sherwin Ealy.

P&G is also one of the companies supporting LULAC’s Young Readers program. The Young Readers, administered by the LULAC National Educational Service Centers, encourages children to make reading a life-long habit. At each site, thirty first, second and third graders meet weekly for six weeks during the summer with a reading teacher in a program designed to make reading fun. Reading sessions are enhanced by trips to the movie theater, the museum and the newspaper printing press. Games, treats and prizes help turn an educational experience into a fun summertime activity kids look forward to week after week

Local Public Libraries also recognized the need for support and are offering bi-lingual programs for the youngsters, like the Bilingual Story Hour @ Kenton County Public Library, sponsored by Centro de Amistad.



Sister Juana Méndez (Centro de Amistad), Gloria Hurst (author of Tiny Troubles/Pequeños Problemas), Sara Howry (Kenton County Public Library)

Other companies and organizations are addressing minority High School students to encourage them to go to college. Citizens’ Committee on Youth (CCY), INROADS, Inc. and WCPO-TV created four years ago Careers in Media Minority High School Internship Program. This program is an initiative designed to enable high school juniors to explore the various career opportunities available in the media industry through an unpaid summer internship. Students receive the same hands-on experience usually reserved for college-level interns. In 2006 “The Spanish Journal” will be co-sponsor of this program.



Mona Harrison Morrow, Community Affairs Director WCPO-TV with graduates of recent 2005 internship program “Careers in Media”

To encourage Latino High School students to explore careers in science, Northern Kentucky University, supported by P&G, organizes every year a Summer Science Camp,

where students were able to learn from NKU faculty members the latest developments in physics, chemistry, or biology.



Maria Molina (P&G), Leo Calderon and Dr. Miriam Kannan (NKU) with some of the graduates of the 2005 Summer Science Camp for Latino High School students.

These are wonderful examples of support programs, there is so much more to do! The Presidential Advisory Commission said it best in 2003 “The present [education] crisis not only threatens to leave behind yet another generation of Hispanic children, it will limit their mobility in the labor force and could jeopardize our country’s ability to compete economically. The crisis requires us ensure educational excellence for Hispanic Americans now.”

But it doesn’t help if US and state legislators are trying to cut education budgets. For example, recently proposed budget cuts at US Senate would result in the largest cut in student aid in history, cutting \$12 billion over the next five years and making it more difficult and expensive for students to borrow money to attend college.

As community, we have to make sure that “no child is left behind” and that there are enough resources for education in the federal and state budgets. OCHLA (Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs) organized in March 2005 meetings with several Ohio legislators to address the impact of potential budget cuts on Hispanic/Latino community.



Michael Beck with Ohio Senator Patricia Clancy and Elvia Tuttle (Cincinnati Public Library) lobbying for no education cuts in Ohio.

Local companies and organizations, big and small, understand the importance of education, and are donating their time, resources and money to help. Cincinnati Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Toyota give away scholarships to Hispanic students, National Society of Hispanic MBAs promotes advanced education and many of their members serve as role models for young Hispanics, US Bank co-sponsors NKU’s Latino Multi-Cultural Center, LaVERDAD and MidwestLatino donate money for LULAC scholarships.

We are very excited about the collaboration between LULAC Cincinnati and “The Spanish Journal” on promoting education among Hispanics, especially learning English. If you would like to support these efforts and get involved, please contact us at:

info@midwestlatino.com

Working together we can make a difference in Tri-State.

For more community news, please visit us at:
www.midwestlatino.com

To submit news, email us at: info@midwestlatino.com