

Latino Youth Leadership Conference

The **Latino Youth Leadership Conference** is an annual conference for Latino middle school and high school youth, consisting of workshops, presentations, and activities that promote **healthy youth development, leadership, and positive cultural identity**. Through interactive workshops and activities, conference participants learn from each other and share their perspectives and experiences regarding issues relevant in the lives of Latino youth. What makes this event one-of-a-kind, is that it is planned by Latino youth, a key element of the conference's continued success. A leadership committee of twenty Latino high school students meets weekly for eight months to plan and implement all elements of the conference.

The **2015 Latino Youth Leadership Conference** took place on **May 8, 2015** at **Augsburg College**. The Theme of the 2015 conference was "**Express your Identity/Expresa tu identidad**" and conference participants also enjoyed a powerful and dynamic message delivered by national Keynote speaker Gabe Salazar. **Thank you to our conference sponsors** Augsburg College, Youthprise, Medica Foundation, Mall of America, and McDonalds for making it all possible.

Outcomes:

258 Latino middle and high school youth representing **24** Minneapolis, suburban and outstate schools, along with **68** adult mentors, school personnel, community leaders, and artists participated in the 2015 conference.

95% of youth expressed increased skills, knowledge and/or positive attitudes in at least one of the following areas: self, relationships, education and/or community.

86% of youth reported increased pride in and/or connection to their culture.

Some things that youth reported taking away from the conference that they would use in their everyday life were increased **self-confidence**, embracing and **believing in themselves**, and being **proud of who they are**.

To view more photos of this event, please go to our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/laoportunidadinc



Youth Program Participant & Volunteer Spotlight:

Reyna Yadria Martinez Nasario

Reyna Yadira Martinez Nazario has been involved with La Oportunidad in one role or another – from participant, to youth leader, to volunteer, to intern, to mentor – for the past ten years. Reyna initially became involved in La Oportunidad as a participant of the Latino Youth Program when she was in 5th grade. Around the same time, she joined the Líderes del Mañana Mentoring Program which she participated in for five years. In 9th grade, she joined the Youth Planning Committee for La Oportunidad's Annual Latino Youth Leadership Conference which she participated in during all four years of high school.

Since graduating from high school in 2013, Reyna has taken up volunteer and leadership roles within La Oportunidad. She has served as both an Intern and Mentor for our Annual Latino Youth Leadership Conference and has volunteered as an Assistant for numerous after school groups with the El Camino and Latino Youth Programs.

A Place to Call Home

Reyna says that one reason she has continued to stay involved with La Oportunidad for so many years is that she really likes the organization, especially the youth programming. Another reason she volunteers is that she likes giving back to her community. Reyna has a strong heart for helping others, especially immigrant and cultural communities whose voices often go unheard. Her desire to help others is sincere and genuine and born out a desire to empower others and improve her community rather than for any personal acknowledgment she will receive. Her favorite part of volunteering with La Oportunidad is feeling welcomed every time she arrives. She reports, "it feels like a second home to me."

Life Lessons

Through her involvement with La Oportunidad, Reyna says she has learned many things. As a participant she learned communication skills, about her culture, and how to organize a large event. As an intern, she learned computer and office skills that have been useful in college and jobs. As a mentor for the Youth Planning Committee, Reyna learned self-confidence and how to be a supportive guide and mentor to younger youth.

Hopes and Dreams

Reyna's hopes and dreams for the future include graduating from college and working in a job which allows her to help others. Her long term goal is to work in law enforcement. It is clear that whatever path Reyna takes, she will bring to it a surplus of dedication, caring, and determination. For this is what we have seen from her over the time that we have been honored to have her as a volunteer at La Oportunidad.

For more testimonials from our program participants, please visit our website <http://oportunidad.org/about/reflections-of-peace/>

Also, "like" us on Facebook to stay up to date on our special events and activities.



Path to Success: The Young Professionals Program

The Young Professionals Program was created to address and eliminate barriers Latino immigrants face in order to complete their high school education, pursue a post-secondary education, and prepare them for a job that leads to a professional career path.

Partnering with Wellstone International High School this year, the Young Professionals Program (YPP) served 49 Latino high school students. The YPP has two components: 1) One-on-one advising and 2) eight training sessions. Students decide whether they will take both components. Of the 49 students, 20 completed both the advising and the training sessions.

Participants learned to use the Student Portal, selected two possible professional careers, developed a plan for their future, created their resume, learned how to finance their college education, and received an understanding of the job process in Minnesota. Way to go!!

Outcomes

100% learned how to write a resume.

83% identified a mentor for themselves.

96% identified what profession they would like to pursue.

100% created a plan to fulfill their long and short term goals.

96% learned how to apply for scholarships.



Benefiting the Entire Family and Community!

La Oportunidad's diverse programming helps Latinos of all ages achieve success. Latino children and youth are provided culturally enriched education that promotes positive attitudes and fundamental life skills. Teens and young adults develop leadership skills, explore cultural identity and plan for education and future careers. Programs for Latino parents deliver positive techniques to enhance parenting skills, maintain a stable home life and support their children's education. Other programs for Latino adults offer assistance in domestic abuse intervention and prevention. Specific programs include:

El Camino (The Path) — Grades K-5

Latino Youth — Grades 6-12

Padres — Parents

Jovenes Profesionales/Young Professionals

Early Literacy

Latinos Ending Abuse Program

To learn more about La Oportunidad and our programs,
visit our website, Facebook page or give us a call at 612-872-6165



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258 youth representing 24 schools attended our Latino Youth Leadership Conference in May, more inside...



Our Website

Check out our website, www.oportunidad.com, to find information about our staff, programs, accomplishments and more. You can also access our 2014 annual report online, which has a fresh new look this year! Take a look and learn more about La Oportunidad.

Facebook

Want to stay caught up on everything going on at La Oportunidad? Check out our Facebook page to get program and organization updates, receive invitations to special events and activities and see who else likes what we do!

www.facebook.com/laoportunidadinc

Help Support La Oportunidad

If you'd like to help us make the Twin Cities a stronger and more peaceful community, take a look at our website's donation page, <http://oportunidad.org/donate/>, where you will find information regarding donations, sponsorships and our matching program. We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the help of our generous sponsors and donors. Please contribute!