

Peace News

Winter 2008
La Oportunidad Newsletter

La Feria Latino Resource Fair provides resources to the Latino community

On August 9, 2008, La Oportunidad and Metropolitan Health Plan came together to host the 14th Annual Latino Family Resource Fair (La Feria). La Feria was held in collaboration with the Midtown Farmer's Market. Two thousand fairgoers enjoyed shopping for produce from local Minnesota farmers while gathering helpful resources and connecting to service providers.

This year, a special emphasis was placed on access to community resources. A total of 90 organizations gathered at the site of the Midtown Farmer's Market to provide Latino families with a wide variety of resources including health screenings, information about social services, nutrition, and educational opportunities available in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

The day was filled with fun for the entire family. In between gathering resources for their families, fairgoers enjoyed food from La Loma restaurant and live entertainment from several local artists including Sentir Venezolano, Fuego Flamenco, Grupo Caribe and Korzel Musical. Children enjoyed playing a variety of carnival games, having their faces painted, balloon animals, an entertaining clown, and a make and take craft project.

La Feria would not have been possible without the support from our sponsors. We would like to say thank you to ClearWay MNSM, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, Medica Foundation, UCare, Hennepin County Office of Multi-cultural Services, City of Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights and the Department of Health and Family Support for helping to make La Feria such a great success.



Inside this issue

El Camino Children's Program	3
From the Executive Director	2
Funder Acknowledgements	9
Girl Scouts Partnership	4
La Feria	1
Latino Youth Development Collaborative	8
Latino Youth Program	5
LEAP for Women	4
Mentor Acknowledgements	6
Mentoring Spotlight	7
Reflections of Peace	10
Volunteer Acknowledgements	6
Volunteer Spotlight	3

Peace News is the newsletter of La Oportunidad. La Oportunidad's mission is to champion the development of Latino individuals and families to create a strong, peaceful community.

Message from the Executive Director



As the state of the economy continues to impact the financial situation of our organizations, we remain strong in our commitment to serve our community. We have become more strategic in our collaborations and more creative in our service delivery. Significant accomplishments have been made through the Latino Youth Development Collaborative of which we serve as founding agency and fiscal agent. We have also increased our public policy involvement and visibility in the larger community. In addition, we are in the process of developing a fund development plan that will guide us in our efforts to diversify and increase our funding base.

On behalf of the hundreds of families we have served this past semester, we would like to thank you and ask for your continued support as we need it more than ever. We are excited about the challenges and rewards of continuing with our vision of achieving a community in which Latinos, whether long-term residents or new arrivals, thrive and contribute to the strength of the greater community!

Stay warm (inside and out) during these winter months!

Eloisa Echavez



La Oportunidad, Inc.

Championing the development of Latino individuals and families to create a strong, peaceful community.

2700 E Lake Street, Suite 3100
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Ph: 612-872-6165
Email: oportunidad@oportunidad.org
Website: www.oportunidad.org



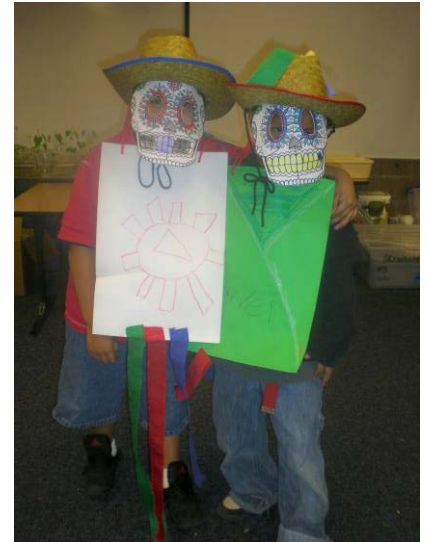


El Camino Students Learn Folkloric Mexican Dance

Students in the El Camino after school program at Hans Christian Andersen Open School performed la Danza de los Viejitos, a traditional Mexican dance, this fall. La Danza de los Viejitos originated in the Mexican state of Michoacan, but made its way to Minneapolis when it was taught to our El Camino group participants.

The group, comprised of second and third graders, made their own costumes before learning and performing the dance. The children made and decorated *gabanes* (shawls), skeleton masks and hats using construction paper, yarn, crayons and crepe paper.

After completing their costumes, the children were ready to learn la Danza de los Viejitos. Using wooden poles as canes, the children danced hunching over, imitating the dancing of the "viejitos."



Volunteer Spotlight

As volunteer coordinator here at La Oportunidad, I have had the privilege to supervise hundreds of dedicated, passionate, and hard working individuals who have donated their time to our agency. Emily Oaks, a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, is one of these extraordinary individuals.

Emily began volunteering at La Oportunidad in the fall of her freshman year. As a first year student at the University of Minnesota, Emily found La Oportunidad through a class she was taking. Over the course of the semester, Emily assisted in one of our El Camino classes, and helped prepare and execute activities for the kids. After her class was over, Emily continued to volunteer at La Oportunidad by providing childcare during our evening parenting groups. Over the summer, Emily continued her work with La Oportunidad through an internship helping to plan La Oportunidad's Latino Family Resource Fair. Emily's dedication to La Oportunidad has never faltered, even while attending school full-time and working two jobs. Emily has been a great asset to La Oportunidad and we are very grateful for all of her hard work, energy, and talents.

To volunteer or intern at La Oportunidad, contact Haley at 612-872-6165 or haleyb@oportunidad.org.

Girl Scouts Partner with La Oportunidad

The **Padres Parenting Program** provides comprehensive programming, including collaborations, special events, and year-round classes to empower Latino parents with the tools necessary to support their children's education, raise healthy, well-adjusted children who will contribute to their communities, and promote peaceful families and communities. Because child supervision is key to the success of the program, it is provided for participating parents.

As the number of Padres Parenting Programs participants increased, so did the number of children requiring adult supervision. In order to provide a more meaningful experience for the children being supervised, La Oportunidad established a partnership with the Girl Scouts in January 2008. Currently, Latinas Unidas Girl Scouts Troop 13397 has a core group of 8 girls, ages 6-15 years old, whose parents participate in the Padres Parenting Programs at the La Oportunidad location. In addition to weekly activities, the girls and their families have participated in two camping trips.



Women Unlearn Abuse

For over 3 years, La Oportunidad, Inc. has been providing groups for women who have been abusive in their relationships or families. In 2005, there were 13 women enrolled in the Latinos Ending Abuse Program (LEAP) for Women and we have served over 50 participants to date.

LEAP for Women is an outcome-based program that provides an 8 week culturally-appropriate Spanish language program for women who have acted violently and may be mandated to participate by the court and the criminal justice system.

The program operates weekly. Women must attend an intake orientation, and then actively participate in the 8 week, 2 hour educational course. The goal is to end violence and abusive behaviors. It does not address other goals such as saving or ending relationships. It is structured so each participant learns about herself—with no blaming or attempting to "fix" a partner or others. (continued on page 8)

Latino Youth Celebrate Ancestry

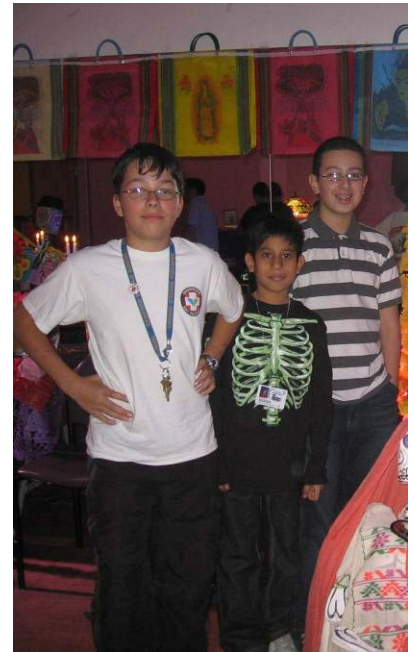


Participants in the Latino Youth Program remembered and honored their dead ancestors this fall through the celebration of Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). Learning about this 3,000 year old tradition has been a component of the Latino Youth Program school-based programming for many years.

This year, youth learned about the history of sugar skulls and the historical significance it has in the Día de los Muertos tradition. After learning about sugar skulls and sharing their stories about family and friends that have past away, students were able to decorate their own sugar skull to be displayed on an ofrenda in their school.

Students at Armstrong High School set up an ofrenda and answered the questions of teachers and students as they walked by. They were able to inform their classmates and teachers about the significance of Día De Los Muertos and the role that it plays in their culture and families. The ofrenda was displayed for three weeks in memory of those that have struggled for our Latino/Chicano civil rights.

At Plymouth Middle School, youth were able to show their connection to the tradition by bringing personal items from home to place on the altar they set-up at the front of the school. Many brought personal pictures of their loved ones. Some brought roses and another youth a poem written by a relative that had passed. The altar made its journey to the media center after a couple of days where students were able to learn about this important tradition.



Thank You to our wonderful volunteers and mentors

- Kendra Allen
- Karla Anzures
- Mallary Barr
- Subia Beg
- Daniel Belich
- Becca Bicanich
- Lauren Brannen
- Bill Buenzli
- Denise Buenzli
- Philip Burger
- Tiffany Calderon
- Devin Clarkson
- Megan Craig-Casmer (mentor)
- Kriselda Cuellar (mentor)
- Tiffany De Leon
- Ryan Dean
- Carolina DePaulis
- Crystal Diaz
- Evidio Domingo
- Stephanie Drake
- Alondra Espejel
- Ana Espitia
- Olga Maria Fernandez Solivan (mentor)
- Theresa Galles
- Arlette Gaona-Ramon
- Kerry George
- Susana Gluck
- Gianna Gutierrez
- Rafael Harrington (mentor)
- Maddie Hodapp
- Robin Irwin
- Mari Kempton
- Anne Knauff (mentor)
- Alyssa Kohn (mentor)
- Josey Landrieu (mentor)
- Carmen Lara
- Sarah Leonard
- Carolina Lopez
- Carolina Melguizo (mentor)
- Joe Mailander
- Megan McCormick
- Angie Medina
- Jordan Monson
- Jackie Murillo
- Mike Nelson
- Emily Oaks
- Griselda Orozco (mentor)
- Jessika Peredia Rodriguez
- Daniela Perez-Velez
- Ross Peterson
- Paula Piazza
- Rebecca Pottebaum
- Lindsay Prowizor
- Lisa Prowizor
- Daniela Quevedo
- Jackie Rahkola
- Jennifer Reidy (mentor)
- Sarah Ritterspach
- Rick Rocheford
- Katherine Samuel
- Christine Schlangen Espinoza
- Val Schulz
- Lilia Serna (mentor)
- Paola Serrate
- Andre Shannon
- Duane Smith
- Felisa Smith
- Susan Sobelson
- Adam Spencer
- Ann Springer
- Maureen Springer (mentor)
- Tim Streitz
- Marco Tapia
- Emmet Timmons
- Sara Tomczyk
- Lucia Trinidad
- Cindy Valle
- Anna Vangsness (mentor)
- Bianca Villeda
- Beatriz Viveros
- Ellen Wilkinson
- Rebecca Wynia
- Igor Yakushev
- Amber
- Ashley
- Benjamin
- Crystal
- Derek
- Matt



Mentoring Spotlight: Jennifer and Yessica

Jennifer Reidy and Yessica Zuñiga Tepango have been participants for two and a half years through La Oportunidad's Líderes del Mañana (Tomorrow's Leaders) Mentoring Program. Jennifer and Yessica spend time at least 4-8 hours together every month doing various activities and working on goals. They say they like using their time together as an opportunity to try things that they haven't done before. Some of their favorite things to do together include cooking and eating food from different cultures. As Yessica will be starting high school next year, one thing they are focusing on even more this year is planning for the future. They have set a goal during the upcoming months to talk about and visit different high schools in preparation for Yessica's move to ninth grade. They also plan on visiting several colleges and exploring different career options.

Yessica says that having a mentor has helped her in many ways. "It has helped me by giving me the confidence to talk to grown-ups. Before I didn't really like talking to my parents because I thought that they wouldn't understand, but now I understand that they do understand and that I can talk to them whenever I need to." Yessica says that what she appreciates most about Jennifer is that "she helps me with things, she is always understanding and she gives me confidence."



Jennifer says that it has been wonderful to be with Yessica through the transition from girl to young woman. She says Yessica has taught her many things and that the greatest benefit that being a mentor has brought to her is that "it brought Yessica into my life. She helps me keep perspective, focus on what's important and have fun." Jennifer would tell anyone considering being a mentor, "It will be one of the best experiences of your life. You'll learn more than you'll be able to teach and you will both have a lot of fun along the way. Bring drive, dedication, and a smile to every outing."



Latino Youth Development Collaborative: A True and Unique Collaborative

The mission of the Latino Youth Development Collaborative (LYDC) is to increase and enhance healthy youth development and educational success for Latino youth through access, participation, leadership, and family engagement. The Collaborative has begun implementation of its activities, which fall under the following four major goals:

- 1) To increase Latino access to school and community-based academic enrichment programs,
- 2) To increase Latino participation in healthy youth development activities,
- 3) To promote Latino family engagement in educational systems, and
- 4) To develop intergenerational Latino community leadership and advocacy.

The Collaborative has now grown to include close to thirty community partners who are establishing a unified voice for the educational agenda of Latinos in Hennepin County. The Collaborative and its community partners meet on a regular basis to discuss issues affecting the educational success of our Latino youth and to provide support to one another.

Founding agencies La Oportunidad and La Escuelita secured funding for the Collaborative from Hennepin County and later received a grant from the Minneapolis Foundation.

The LYDC was created three years ago with the leadership of Hennepin County, La Oportunidad, La Escuelita, Centro, and advising from the Minnesota Department of Health's Office of Minority and Multicultural Health.

We will keep you up-to-date about our progress. In the mean time, if you would like more information or would like to join in our efforts, please contact Rosita Balch of Hennepin County at (office) 612-596-8526 or (cell) 612-919-8409.



Women Unlearning Abuse (continued from page 4)

Violence can be unlearned; non-violence can be learned. The program holds participants accountable for their violence and facilitates learning alternatives to dealing with anger. Group participants learn to identify their emotions and use appropriate ways to express them, identifying cues that precede their violence and develop a self-control plan.

The program has a positive effect on families and community; women attending the program are often working to be reunited with their children. Mothers who have learned non-violent skills to resolve the conflicts they are facing are better mothers and entire families can benefit from the acquired new skills. As the program models respect for all, this learned skill is appropriate in the workplace, in schools, and in the home. When there is positive change within a healthy family, there is less dysfunction, less stress, more energy and often individuals can give back to their communities.



Thank You to Our Generous Funders in 2008!

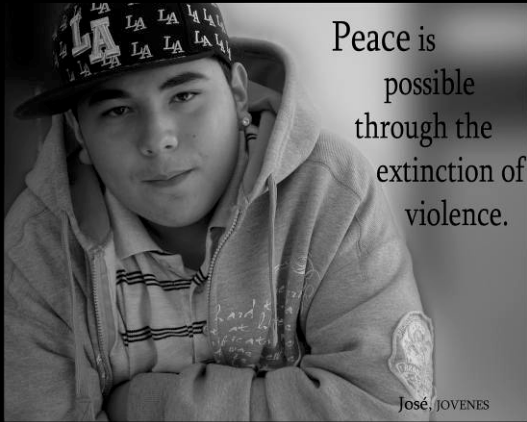
Corporations and Foundations: 3M Foundation, Ameriprise Foundation, Elmer and Eleanor Andersen Foundation, Anonymous, F. R. Bigelow Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, Otto Bremer Foundation, Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation, Carlson Companies, Carlson Foundation, ClearWay MinnesotaSM, Epworth Methodist Church, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Imation Corporation, Imation Foundation, Jewish Community Relations Council, Kopp Family Foundation, Marbrook Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Medica, Medica Foundation, Metropolitan Health Plan, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Michaud Cooley Erickson, Minnesota Children's Museum, Casey Albert T. O'Neil Foundation, Piper Family Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation, Prosperan Bank of Maplewood, Prudential, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation, Thomson Reuters, UCare, US Bank, Van Konynenburg Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation, Wells Family Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota, YWCA of Minneapolis

In-Kind Donors: Ameriprise Financial, Robert J. Bauer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, Full Cycle, Loh Shih Hurng, La Loma Tamales, Manny's Tortas, Patagonia, REI, Javier Rodríguez Gaitán, Medica, Target, The Hub Bicycle Co-op, UCare, YMCA Camp Menogyn, YWCA of Minneapolis

Government and Federated Funds: City of Minneapolis, Dakota County, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Saint Paul Youth Services, State of Minnesota, Twin Cities schools, United Way Combined Federal Campaign

Individual Donors: Jim Angelos, Anonymous Donors, Demian Arenas, Bernice Arias-Sather, Pamela Augustin, Jose Barra, Maria Benavides, Timothy Berardinis, Lynn Bergin, Debra Braun, Tiffany Calderon, Lourdes Cancel Rodriguez, Monica DeCastro, Ruby Diaz, Eloisa Echavez, Christine Espinoza, Alex J. Gonzalez, Maria Gonzalez-O'Brien, Joyce Grublesky, Stephen Indvik, Geralynn Kephart-Strong, James Kilborn, Julio Lacayo, Patricia Lacayo, Amanda Lagrange, David Laurent, Tambri Lawless, Angel Ledesma, Brien Link, Rosa Littenken, Mary Lowen, Naomi Lund, Jessica McBride, Allison Mcqee, Julissa Medrano, Kristine Mogollon, Gladys Negrete-Lampat, Joseph Nuñez, Josh Ortiz, Melissa Ostley, Bonnie Paczkowski, Alice Peña, Charles Prentice, Beatriz Rivera, John Romano, Mark Sauntry, Aileen Seoane, Kristin Shane, Shirley Sinclair, Sarah Smith, Antelmo Solano, Maureen Springer, Jeannet Valencia, Jose Puerto Van Heck Roja, Nora Vega, Eric Wengreen





**Check out our new
website!**

Portraits from La Oportunidad's
20th anniversary celebration project,
Reflections of Peace.



La Oportunidad helps us to be better parents;
this is how my family has become more stable and peaceful. Sonia



*Championing the development of Latino individuals
and families to create a strong, peaceful community.*

2700 E Lake Street, Suite 3100
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Ph: 612-872-6165
Email: oportunidad@oportunidad.org
Website: www.oportunidad.org