

EL OBSERVADOR

de Portland

Part Four: A Time For Success For Latino Youth

Feliz Navidad

Many of the essential things that Latino young people need in order to thrive are missing from their lives. That's the conclusion of a survey that included 358 Latino sixth, eighth and tenth grade students (as part of a survey of 10,000 students overall) within Multnomah County. The survey measured the presence of 40 assets or building blocks that all young people need to grow up healthy, caring and competent.

It's simple really. The more of these assets a child has, the more likely that child will succeed. On the other hand, young people with the fewest assets generally have the highest involvement in drug abuse, crime, and other dangerous behaviors. On average, as our survey revealed, local Latino youth have only 18 of these 40 assets, leaving them vulnerable to many problems.

Now that we know that, what do we do? Well, as this research report reveals, you can do a great deal. For example, most Latino youth say their family provides high levels of love and support, but few have other adult role models. This is something community members can give to them. Not enough Latino youth are mo-



A profile of Latino Youth was conducted by the Multnomah Commission on Children & Families.

tivated to do well in school, and few say the school provides an encouraging environment. Involvement in the schools can change that environment. Latino youth remain optimistic about the future, yet only one in five feels valued by the community. As community members, we need to let them know that we do care. The Latino community sees itself as a community with extended families and now we must use those families and community to help provide the support our young people lack.

What do we know about our Latino youth? We know most have hope. We know they value honesty and accept personal responsibility. We know they are concerned about promoting social justice and helping others in their community.

Their inner strengths and attitudes contradict the myth that young people simply don't care. Many are involved in community service and their religious communities, care about their school, stand up for what they believe in, and see a bright future for themselves.

Latino youth continue to believe and to care and to hope even as they lack the support

that can virtually guarantee success.

Most Latino youth say they don't have positive adult role models. Most Latino youth say they don't know how to make choices and plan ahead. Many say they don't feel that adults value them. These are things adults can help to fix.

Our youth need parents, relatives, neighbors, schools, members of the religious community, and community members who believe in them. They need adults who will take the time to help them succeed.

Through this survey, we discovered that most of our young people feel they have family support and love, but the majority says their family doesn't communicate well. Far too few feel the community cares about their success or failure. While young people care about learning and we know their school environment can have an enormous impact on shaping their skills and ambitions, too few have adults who are involved in their education.

On the average, our Latino youth have just 18 of the 40 assets they need, but if doesn't have to stay that way. There are things we can do to provide our youth

with positive role models, and to show our interest in the success of every Latino young person.

The important research shows that for our Latino young people to succeed, we must take the time to show them we care for them, take the time to communicate with them, and take the time to support them. By doing so, we give our youth the assets they need to succeed.

To order additional reports, call the Take the Time Line at 503/248-5066.



Augustana Lutheran Church
NE 15th & Knott
Close to Lloyd Center/Broadway

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24

**7:00 p.m. Candlelight Jazz/
Gospel Carol Service**
Manlyn Keller, Ron Steen,
Kevin Deitz, Janice Scroggins

**11:00 pm Candlelight
Service with Choir & Bells**

Music Team: Mark Huth,
Beverly North, Beverly J. Kindschuh

10:30 pm Christmas Concert

"Savior of the Nations"

Rev. Walter J. "Mark" Knutson
Celebrating 92 years
2710 NE 14th *288-6174



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