

EL OBSERVADOR

Nurses Recruited

Linfield grows diversity

Linfield College and Salem Health are working together increase the number of Latino registered nurses available to care for the mid-Willamette Valley's growing population.

Latinos make up more than 10 percent of the population in Oregon, but Latino registered nurses are only 1 percent of the health care workforce. The chance of a Latino patient being cared for by a nurse native to the patient's culture is even lower in the Salem area, where Latinos are 22 percent of the population.

"When people seek health care, they are seeking comfort," says Laurie Barr, human resources director for Salem Health. "When you are sick, you are very vulnerable. It can be terrifying if you don't understand the language."

On Linfield's Portland campus, an innovative initiative was launched in 2004 called Ayudando Podemos ("Helping each other, we can do it").

"We saw an increase in Latino enrollment from 2.6 percent in the 2002-03 academic year to 8.4 percent last year," says Peggy Wros, associate dean for the nursing school.

Ayudando Podemos recruits Latino high school students from Oregon, helping them obtain Bachelor of Science degrees in nursing.

Orientation sessions are given to families, and students are provided with scholarships, support groups, advising, bilingual support, and tutoring for courses and the licensing exam for nurses. Many program graduates mentor other aspiring Latino students.

Linfield's success also means success for Salem Health's drive to improve culturally sensitive care for patients.

"We are increasing the diversity of our applicant pool, and Linfield College is one of the major programs on our radar screen," says Barr, who hired Latino Linfield grads to fill a quarter of Salem Hospital's 2009 summer intern program. Many graduates were recruited through the Ayudando Podemos program.

Trying to Live a Decent Life

Comic twist on immigrant life

Pelu Theatre, a company based in Portland but rooted in San Juan, Puerto Rico presents "A Suicide Note from a Cockroach," March 18-21 and March 25-28 at Imago Theatre, 17 S.E. Eighth Ave.

A circus theater spectacle, the play explores the themes of exile and the birth of a new subculture in America, putting a comic twist to the existential dilemma of being an immigrant in the U.S.

Pedro, a cockroach from the low-income housing projects in New York City, is about to commit suicide. He has been married seven times, and each of his wives has been killed! He lost his best friend, he lost his job... he has nothing and he hates the world! This is his story, a story of a poor Latino that went from human to a suicidal cockroach.

The company uses circus theater as its vocabulary for telling stories: aerialists, tumblers, acrobats, musicians and, of course, clowns form an ensemble of cockroaches trying to live a decent life -- but with one



Carlos Alexis Cruz and Mayra Acevedo explore the themes of exile and birth in a comic twist to bring an immigrant in the U.S.

antagonist, a human!

The show will be performed in "spanglish" or the language that defined the puertorican exile in NYC. Both English and Spanish speaking audiences would not find any trouble

in understanding or following the action, and at the same time be transported musically to the "barrio".

Admission is \$10. For tickets and more information, visit pelutheatre.com.

Food Bank Needs Teachers

The Oregon Food Bank is recruiting Spanish-speaking volunteers to teach and assist

its Nutrition Education program in Washington County.

"If you love to cook or have Spanish-language skills, consider joining our team," said Ginny Sorensen, Nutrition Education program coordinator.

Materials for curricula are offered in Spanish to groups of adults and groups of parents with children.

The hands-on course helps

people learn to stretch their food budget while creating nutritious meals and snacks. The course covers basic nutrition, menu planning, food-bud-getting and shopping through six, consecutive, weekly sessions.

For more information, contact Alana Harris at 503-439-6510, extension 309 or email nepwest@oregonfoodbank.org.

Youth Fest at Rex Putman

All members of the community are invited to a free Latino youth and family festival, featuring dancing, food, music, youth talent and Mexican bingo.

The event, sponsored by Northwest Family Services and

the Juvenile Assistance Corporation, is scheduled Friday, March 19 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Rex Putman High School, 4950 S.E. Roethe Road.

For more information, call 503-546-5077.

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