



BIENVENIDO

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Northeastern Center Inc.

The Bienvenido Newsletter is Northeastern Center's primary means of communicating with individuals and organizations current happenings in the Bienvenido Program. It shares activities, personal stories, and current initiatives that address the mental health of Latinos in Northeast Indiana.

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Bienvenido Program and Latino Moms

When I began working with the small group of three Latina moms, all who have children attending an inner-city school, I thought that they may have recently arrived in the US. But, during our first meeting, I discovered they had been in the US for 8-12 years. Quite unlike the three groups of middle school students I worked with over the past year and a half, as they had all been here for less than 3 years.

The women had the same issues to address in their search for being able to express for the first time and their leaving Mexico to come to the U.S. Never before had they had the opportunity to talk with other women about their isolation, their fears, depression, family alcoholism, issues of abuse, and wanting to expand their sense of community. Through the seven week Bienvenido classes we were able to talk about (in Spanish) and walk through these issues and provide community resources to support their ability to seek further assistance from counselors or agencies in Elkhart, IN.

They expressed that the school community (second only to the church community) is providing them with the opportunity to become involved in their children's education, expand their horizons, attend parent programs at the school, and learn English through the adult ESL program.

Between their pre-test and post-test evaluations, many of the symptoms first described in the pre-test had diminished or been eliminated regarding mental health issues. All believed the program is very beneficial and at the closing ceremony we were excited, but sad to end the class. We provided each participant with a Certificate of Completion and took pictures. Additionally, we had a multi-ethnic lunch and another opportunity to just chat.

It is always a pleasure for me to facilitate the Bienvenido Program and we look forward to possibly having a class for parents at another inner-city school that might begin in mid-April.

Bienvenido Program Activities

Bienvenido Facilitator Training CD

The Bienvenido Program has a facilitator training for individuals and organizations interested in implementing the program in their community. The CD outlines the reasons why one should participate in the program, what you will learn at the training, and process for establishing training in your community. If you are interested in receiving a CD please feel free to email Michael Steigmeyer at msteigmeyer@nec.org. In May, information will be made available regarding training schedule.

Bienvenido Program and CAPT

The Center for Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) of the Minnesota Public Health Institute accepted the nomination made by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction to present the Bienvenido Program at their annual Science Service Academy on April 27-28, 2006 in Minnesota. We are honored to have been nominated and we look forward to sharing the Bienvenido Program with CAPT.

Bienvenido and community pastors

In March NEC met with six local pastors at Templo Adulam in Goshen, IN to present the Bienvenido Program. Pastors had the opportunity to participate in one of the class lessons and were encouraged to ask questions regarding the program. It was a great opportunity to share with pastors the Bienvenido Program.



Bienvenido Program and LEAP

In March NEC met with Matt Bell, LEAP, to discuss the possibility of conducting the Bienvenido Program with LEAP students. We agreed that we would begin the Bienvenido classes in May at Ligonier Elementary. LEAP is a not for profit adult literacy agency that serves Noble County residents who wish to learn English, earn a GED, and participate in other educational programs.

Bienvenido Program and Teens

In our January newsletter we informed you about our upcoming work with seven high school students at West Noble High School in Ligonier, IN.

We are happy to report that we met with the students for seven weeks and we worked at completing the Bienvenido class lessons. Students did a great job in participating and gave excellent feedback regarding lesson content. Some of the students who participated had been in the US for three days, two weeks, and two years.

The students stated they liked the game ball and the opportunity to listen to their classmates share their thoughts regarding positive and negative experiences in this country. Perhaps our greatest learning came from having an opportunity to listen to one another talk about what an immigrant needs to know in order to succeed in the school environment. Some of the risk factors students felt they had adjusting to this community were the following:

- Low self-esteem
- High stress
- Poor control of their anger
- Peer pressure
- Not following the rules
- Hanging out with friends who use drugs and alcohol
- Conflict between their parents

Students also noted factors that protect them from having poor mental health. These are noted below:

- I know how to manage my stress
- My parents are respectful to one another
- Good schools in my town
- Peaceful community
- I attend church every now and then
- I make good decisions
- I know drugs are bad for me
- There are counselors in my town
- Good relationship with my parents
- My family supports me

On April 21 we plan to take a field trip to a local restaurant (El Paraiso) and celebrate our completing the classes. Students will receive a certificate and a small gift for their participation. The meal and gift is made possible due to a financial donation made by Waterford Mennonite Church Mission and Service Ministry Commission.

All in all, it was a great experience to facilitate the lessons with the adolescents.

Bienvenido Program Advisory Committee

The Bienvenido Advisory Committee will meet on April 19, 2006 for its first meeting to work at establishing general structure of the committee. We are grateful to our community leaders who have said yes to participating on the Bienvenido Advisory Committee:

Matt Bell, LEAP and State Representative, Albion, IN

Juliana Casillas, El Rincón Latino, Ligonier, IN

Marcia Good, Ph.D., University of Notre Dame

Judge Michael J. Kramer, Albion, IN

Nabor Montano, El Mariachi Restaurant, Topeka, IN

Randy Myers, Noble County Council

Ryan McCarty, NAMI Indiana, Indianapolis, IN

Dr. Benito Pérez, M.D., Ligonier, IN

Frank Pizaña, Northeastern Center, Ligonier, IN

Liliana Quintero, Hispanic Health Coalition of Elkhart County, Elkhart, IN

José Luis Rivera, Center for Nonviolence, Fort Wayne, IN

Sue Sprague, LCSW, Northeastern Center, Angola, IN

Melanie Tijerina, West Noble Elementary, Ligonier, IN

Cris Torres, Goshen College Social Work Student, Goshen, IN

Margarita White, Celebrate Diversity Project, Ligonier, IN

National Committee Members

Pablo Hernández, M.D., National Latino Behavioral Health Association, Colorado

Tonia Caselman, Ph.D., Oklahoma University School of Social Work

Northeastern Center feels honored to have such a rich and diverse group of respected leaders and community members on the Advisory Committee. They bring to us an opportunity to grow and learn ways to be more effective in our daily work with the Latinos.

Bienvenido Fund Opportunities

Bienvenido Program Scholarships

Participants who participate in the Bienvenido Program have an opportunity to share stories and adjust to living in a new country and community. Participants are provided with basic mental health education information as well as opportunities for informal sharing in a group setting.

\$70.00 provides a student with a scholarship for seven sessions.

Bienvenido Facilitator Training Program

Bienvenido Facilitators participate in a two day training that trains leaders in the Bienvenido curriculum. The facilitators become part of the Bienvenido Facilitator Network. You receive the Bienvenido Newsletter and information on facilitators.

\$249.00 provides a facilitator with a scholarship for a 2 day training.

Bienvenido Dinner

A Bienvenido Dinner is held for participants who have completed the Bienvenido Program. Participants and facilitators gather to share informally their experience in the Bienvenido Program and learn to know other participants. It is an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments achieved in the program.

\$35.00 provides a Bienvenido meal and a small gift.

Send your donation to:

**Bienvenido Fund
Northeastern Center, Inc.
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Kendallville, IN 46755**