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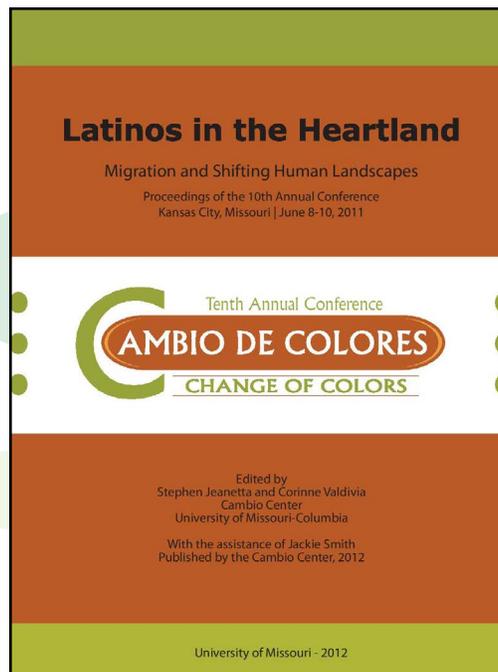
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## A Success Program that Involves Latino Volunteers

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## ► A Success Program that Involves Latino Volunteers

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### Abstract

Hispanics represent the fastest growing ethnic group with a culturally, demographically, and geographically diverse population. For opportunities to be beneficial to the Latino community, it is essential to provide opportunities in volunteerism, such as training for youth and adults based on awareness of the community they serve. This paper discusses Latinos participating in volunteerism training. The new skilled volunteers sent a strong message where they demonstrated that putting their new skills into practice, allowed them to plan and implement a successfully multicultural summer program, with responsibility and passion for children at an elementary school in Sea Tac, WA.

### Introduction

Hispanics represent the fastest growing population in the United States. The 2010 census recorded a total 50.5 million people under the designation, “Hispanic” (United States Bureau of the Census, 2011). The Hispanics/Latinos constitute 16.3% of the total United States population (Wikipedia, 2011). These changes have been most evident in Washington State, where the number of Hispanic residents grew by 71 percent. This group makes up about 11 percent of the state’s population, up from 7.5 percent, in 2000. In King County, Latinos comprise 11 percent of the population (Manning, 2011). Realizing the implication that those numbers represent in this multicultural society, many organizations would like to better recruit Latinos for volunteer roles.

For years, most of the youth development volunteers have operated successfully in homogeneous environments. Gregory, Steinbring, and Sousa (2003), point out that voluntary participation which has characterized so much of America in the past, is still seen as an integral part of the community. However, volunteer programs have not reached out sufficiently to include as diverse a volunteer pool as possible, to accommodate cultural differences in such programs. Chambre (1982), suggests that those organizations should develop new strategies that might capture the volunteer potential of diverse communities with multicultural skills that will make programs more adaptable and culturally appropriate. Perhaps in some instances, new material might be developed to address the needs of diverse communities. “How successful they are in recruitment and retaining Latino adults as volunteers depends on their awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural differences between the majority society and Latinos,” (Hobbs, 2007).

Understanding the dynamics of Latino engagement has become essential to developing programs to accommodate the needs that exist in the Latino community. The community’s level of awareness for the need to serve will support developing strategies that build capacity to implement the programs’ focus on the community needs. One of the most prominent characteristics, and the most important of cultural values, of the Latino population, is the desire to maintain the Spanish language and the solidarity among members of the family (Cluter & Nieto, 2000; Hoorman, 2002; Hobbs, 2003). Based on this, it is important to offer programs in Spanish (Gudiño, Allen, & Crawford, 2009). Additionally, it is important for Extension educators to take into consideration the socioeconomic status of the Latino community when planning educational programs. This will eventually increase communication and build and effective relationships to gain a better understanding of Latino’s needs, limitations and barriers of volunteerism. Taking this approach, new volunteer opportunities will be developed. Consequently, these will bring new challenges and a new level of participation from the Latino community.

### Program Implementation

Washington State University through Extension, set clear objectives in order to effectively serve the diversity of communities and families across the state. In response to engaging Latinos in volunteering opportunities, Extension through the 4-H Youth Development Program in King County, has created a program that involves youth and adult volunteers. For several years, the 4-H Program has been partnering very successfully with several youth organizations that implemented a multicultural program targeting

kids and inspiring youth and adults to become volunteers. This program provides all of the tools necessary to enhance communication with diverse populations around the state regardless of ethnicity. The program also offers an alternate avenue of participation in 4-H Youth Development, in addition to club leadership.

Providing the educational tools necessary to implement a program for the Latino community, in 2010, nine youth and 18 adults (parents) were invited to participate in a quality volunteerism training program. The focus was on the foundation of volunteerism, characteristics of ages and stages, planning and implementing a program, and the development of skills. Subsequently, a Multicultural Summer Program was implemented at Bow Lake Elementary, in Sea Tac, WA, where 35 children in grades K-6 participated. Youth and adult volunteers focused on multicultural activities, targeting topics that ranged from arts and crafts to nutrition. The program also included mathematics and reading.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The positive participation of Latinos in volunteering opportunities has shown that the key was to provide volunteers with the tools necessary for planning and implementing a multicultural program, with appropriate cultural activities. This opportunity offered volunteers a variety of leadership positions. Further involvement of youth and adult Latino volunteers with children will provide the opportunity to practice their skills responsibly and passionately.

The involvement of parent volunteers had a positive influence on the quality of relationships with their children. They stated that children accomplished more during the multicultural program. They were surprised to see that they learned positive skills such as self-help, communication, leadership, teamwork, respect, discipline, creativity, decision-making, health choices, and more.

Partnering with schools might increase the number of parents who become volunteers. This would result in volunteers passing on their traditions through cultural activities, meeting people with similar interest, and doing things that they feel comfortable doing, while they are volunteering with their children.

One of the greatest advantages of recruiting minority youth is that it provides a significant pool of potential volunteers for inclusion in programs, especially during the summer when most students have limited opportunities for employment. Additionally, youth have the opportunity to develop skills that will be essential in their lives, long-term.

Creating quality training delivered in Spanish will build immense potential for Latino communities. This can be worthwhile for the Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. This approach has provided space and opportunity for the creation of programs that support skill development and building awareness. The community became stronger through volunteering and interest about promoting and cultivating new volunteers who are willing to serve their community.

The success of the multicultural program has proven it to be an effective model to develop skills in the Latino Community. It is recommended that 4-H professionals might continue promoting and offering volunteerism opportunities with a cultural component. This will engage and attract non-traditional volunteers and will in turn support the expansion of 4-H Youth Development programs that benefit youth and families in diverse communities.

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## ► Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System: A Blueprint for Community Engagement and Action

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### Abstract

This presentation will discuss the approach we have taken as part of a statewide initiative to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) in the Missouri Juvenile Justice System. DMC looks at the experiences of minority youth compared to Caucasian youth at all stages of the Juvenile Justice System (referrals, detention, petitions, probation, transfers to adult courts, etc.). African American and Latino youth in Missouri are almost twice as likely to be referred to the juvenile office as Caucasian youth. By working intensively in three counties, we have built community teams to analyze local policies, practices, and procedures that produce these disparities. We will discuss how and why we formed local teams, the data analysis process, and lessons learned through our experiences working with these communities. Finally, we will discuss the solutions proposed by the three communities, the successes those communities have experienced, and the challenges they face in striving to reduce disparities.

### Purpose

Nationwide, Latino and African American youth are over-represented in the juvenile justice system at all court contact points, from arrest to confinement (Huizinga, Thornberry, Knight, and Lovegrove, 2007). This over-representation is known as Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and occurs whenever the proportion of minorities in contact with the juvenile justice system is different from their proportion in the general population (Bilchik, 1999). In response to this over-representation, since 1988, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has required every state to study DMC. The goal of this initiative is to ensure equal and fair treatment of every youth in the juvenile justice system, regardless of race or ethnicity (Coleman, 2010 emphasis added). This paper discusses the approach taken, as part of a Missouri initiative, to reduce DMC in the juvenile justice system.

### *How does one study DMC?:*

DMC analyzes the rates of youth of color compared to Caucasian youth, in all stages of the juvenile justice system. These stages include referrals, detention, petitions, probation, and transfers to adult courts. To establish if there is DMC, the Relative Rate Index (RRI) for each contact point is determined. According to OJJDP (2009), "In its simplest form, the RRI is simply the rate of activity involving minority youth divided by the rate of activity involving majority youth" (p. 1-2). An index of 1.0 indicates that a group of juveniles is present at a rate that would be expected, based on population information at the previous decision point in the system. In other words, 1.0 shows proportionality. Over-representation is denoted by numbers greater than 1.0, while under-representation is denoted by numbers less than 1.0. The RRI analyses are completed for each racial/ethnic group (African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans) with a sufficient number of cases. Thus, the RRI analyses indicate whether or not DMC is a potential issue in each county, in which part or parts of the system the potential issue exists, and