

# Latino Initiative Update



## Latino Initiative Update Number 8 May 29, 2008

Dear Latino Initiative Advisory Group Members,

First of all, I am delighted to join the National Campaign's Latino Initiative as the new Fellow. Since joining the Initiative on Cinco de mayo, I have already worked on various projects related to funding, media, outreach, technical assistance, research, and more. Before joining the National Campaign, I spent two years teaching English as a second language in Montevideo, Uruguay. Other experiences include working as a journalist on Capitol Hill and, most recently, as a freelance editor of Spanish-language children's educational materials. It has been a real pleasure to put my background in writing and research and my knowledge of Spanish to use here and I am looking forward to new challenges and to continuing to learn about and contribute to the efforts of the Latino Initiative.

Secondly, I would like to share with you some of the exciting activities going on here at the National Campaign and within the Latino Initiative under the leadership of Ruthie Flores. We continue to receive requests for technical assistance and are heartened to see how many individuals and organizations are taking steps to address the issue of teen pregnancy in the Latino community on a state and local level. We have served as a resource for several recent articles about teen pregnancy among Latinos, and we continue to work with the National Campaign's media department to explore possibilities for the Latino Initiative on social networking sites. We hope to have a Latino Initiative profile up on Myspace Latino this summer.

As you may know, new national data show that the percentage of Latinas who get pregnant at least once before the age of 20 has risen from 51 to 53 percent. Latinas now have the highest teen *pregnancy* rate of any ethnic group in the United States, in addition to the highest teen *birth* rate. These alarming statistics are underscored by reports from the Census Bureau that the U.S. Latino population is growing at an exponential rate—currently one in four children under the age of five is Latino, which means that one in four teens will be Latino by the year 2025, or sooner. We are resolved to use this new information to focus public attention even more intensely on the importance of helping Latino communities to address teen pregnancy. As always, we welcome suggestions from you as to how best to do so.

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**LATINO INITIATIVE NEWS**  
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### I. Press

The Latino Initiative continues to receive coverage in popular press outlets. This Spring we collaborated on articles in several different Spanish-language news sources. Below is a list of three of the publications, with links to each respective article. These articles can also be accessed through our website:

<http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/media.aspx#esp>

- ***The Houston Chronicle***— this article, published on April 15, discusses the high rates of Latina teen pregnancy in Texas and the nationwide increase in teen birth rates in 2006, and offers information about what the city of Houston is doing to address this problem. It highlights findings from our *Voices Heard* fact sheet and lists the National Campaign in the side bar as a

resource. The author quotes LIAG member Vincent Guilamo-Ramos on the importance of parents learning about the social factors that affect their teens, and touches upon each of the ten tips for parent-teen communication described in *Parent-Adolescent Communication: A Guide for Practitioners*.

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/media/pdf/2008/Houston\\_Chronicle\\_4\\_15\\_08.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/media/pdf/2008/Houston_Chronicle_4_15_08.pdf)

- **Ahora Sí**—in the April 17-23 edition, the front page article of this Spanish-language weekly newspaper, which serves Central Texas and is published in conjunction with the *Austin American Statesman*, discusses recent statistics about teen pregnancy and childbirth among Latinas in the United States and specifically in Texas. It focuses on practical tips for Latino parents on communication about sex, and offers advice and local resource information for teens and their parents. The article uses National Campaign data and quotes from an interview with Latino Initiative Senior Manager, Ruthie Flores.

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/media/PDF/2008/Ahora\\_Si\\_4\\_17\\_08.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/media/PDF/2008/Ahora_Si_4_17_08.pdf)

- **People en Español**—the May issue features a story which explores the topic of teen pregnancy in the Latino community primarily by describing the experiences of 4 Latina teen mothers in different locations throughout the United States. It contains facts and statistics about teen pregnancy in the Latino community, as well as advice and resources for parents and teens.

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/media/PDF/2008/People\\_en\\_Espanol\\_May\\_08.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/media/PDF/2008/People_en_Espanol_May_08.pdf)

## II. Publications

- **Science Says #35**—Our latest "Science Says" brief on *Acculturation and Sexual Behavior among Latino Youth* discusses correlations among Latino teens between acculturation, country of origin, and language, and risky sexual behavior. "Science Says #35" is posted on our website at:

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/SS/SS35\\_Acculturation.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/SS/SS35_Acculturation.pdf)

- **A Look at Latinos**—Our new fact sheet, *A Look at Latinos: Relationships in the Latino Community*, examines the perspectives of Latino teens about marriage, cohabitation, and building healthy relationships, and describes some common characteristics of Latino families. It is part of an ongoing National Campaign project on healthy relationships and marriage. This fact sheet is posted on our website in both English and Spanish at:

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/PDF/latino\\_relationships.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/PDF/latino_relationships.pdf) (English)

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/PDF/latino\\_relationships\\_esp.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/PDF/latino_relationships_esp.pdf) (Spanish)

## III. Presentations

### Alexandria Youth Services Coordinating Council

We have been working closely with leaders in Alexandria, Virginia, on how to address high rates of teen pregnancy in the Latino community, and they are considering launching a Latino Initiative of their own. On May 13, 2008, Ruthie Flores presented on "Engaging Hispanic Families in Teen Pregnancy Initiatives," at the Alexandria Youth Services Coordinating Council Meeting. Ruthie distributed two of our publications—*Bridging Two Worlds* and *Parent-Adolescent Communication: A Guide for Practitioners*—to the group of community leaders, practitioners, Resource Mothers, and "teen moms" in attendance. She shared recent national data on teen pregnancy and childbirth rates in the Latino community, then offered insights and practical tips for working most effectively with Latino adolescents and their families. Ruthie's presentation was followed by a panel of 8 Latina and African American teen mothers answering questions about their experiences. Several key points that the teens agreed about were the necessity of presenting teens with clear, unbiased information about sex, the challenges teens sometimes face in obtaining contraceptives and using them responsibly, and the disconnect between teens' perceptions of teen pregnancy and the reality of its consequences.

## Massachusetts Alliance

Over the past few months, we have had several phone calls with The Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy (Mass Alliance) to advise them on developing a Latino Initiative and reaching out to the Massachusetts Latino community. On April 7, 2008, Ruthie Flores and Kristen Tertzakian, the Campaign's Assistant Director of State and Local Outreach, presented at a workshop organized by the Mass Alliance entitled "Engaging and Supporting Latino Families in Teen Pregnancy Prevention." The workshop was held in Worcester for 30 program providers. Ruthie and Kristen also spoke about reducing Latina teen pregnancy at the Youth Empowerment Adolescent Health (YEAH!) Network semi-annual meeting in Holyoke to 100 people, including representatives of youth-serving organizations, city council members, teens, and parents. These events generated much-needed attention from the media and the public, as evidenced by the following article:

<http://www.masslive.com/springfield/republican/index.ssf?/base/news-13/1207644639250200.xml&coll=1>

## IV. National Day News

We've had a wonderful response to our National Day quiz, having logged **280,573** quiz takers as of this morning. Furthermore, **26,177** individuals have taken the quiz in Spanish, compared to last year's 19,445. This means that Spanish language quiz takers account for **9.3%** of our total this year, a significant increase from last year's 5.6%. As you know, the purpose of the National Day is to focus the attention of teens on the importance of avoiding too-early pregnancy and parenthood, so we are thrilled to have so many teens participating with the quiz. Although the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy occurred on May 7, the entire month of May is Teen Pregnancy Prevention month. The Campaign is taking the opportunity to do all it can to facilitate public awareness and discussion of this topic. Members of our staff have made television appearances and been interviewed for news publications, and a public service announcement from Stay Teen reached 31.7 million viewers during the season finale of American Idol on May 21.

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Don't forget to encourage any creative teens you know to visit StayTeen.org to enter the Stay Teen "What's Your Relationship Reality?" Video Contest, which will run until Monday, June 30. As we said in the last update, we'd love to see significant representation from Latino teens, so any help you can offer in spreading the word about the contest is much appreciated.

I'm so pleased to be working here at the Latino Initiative and I hope to have the opportunity to work with some of you in the near future. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me or Ruthie Flores (202.478.8504 or rflores@thenc.org) if you have any questions, comments, news you would like included in the next update, or if you would like to request additional information.

¡Gracias y saludos!

Liz Sabatiuk

Latino Initiative Fellow

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

1776 Massachusetts Ave, NW

Suite 200

Washington, DC 20036

tel: 202.478.8577

fax: 202.303.0462

email: lsabatiuk@thenc.org

TheNationalCampaign.org

StayTeen.org