

LATINO CAUCUS NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

May
Volume 1, Issue 1

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National Association of Social Workers
Latino Caucus
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Washington, DC 20002-4241

Latino Caucus Members Meet during Delegate Assembly

by *Sonia Palacio-Grottola, ACSW*
Chair, Latino Caucus

Members of Latino Caucus, including Cathy Benavidez, El Paso, TX; Magdalena S. Ramirez, Houston, TX; Lori Michelle, San Antonio, TX; Jacquie Stanton, Denver, CO; Patricia Glatt, Poughkeepsie, NY; June Moore, Orange, CA; Ruth M. Howell, Curlsbad, CA; Elba Cleland, Boston, MA; Deb Ford, Connie Lopez, Pico Niera, CA; Arline Prigoffs, Sacramento, CA; Carmen Ortiz Henricks, NY; Hasani Grough, Pasadena, CA; Deborah Casado, Alameda, CA; Betty Garcia, Clovis, CA; Saundra Starks, Bowling Green, KY; Hilda Hernandez-gravelle, Brookline, MA; Carmen R. Navarro, Montebello, CA; Homer Lopez, Boston MA; Josefina Ahumadq, Tucson, AR, met with Dr. Ruth Mayden, president of NASW, Dr. Josephine Nieves, executive director, and Leticia Diaz, Luisa Lopez, Tracy Whitaker, NASW staff for dinner during Delegate Assembly on August 14, 1999, at the Hyatt Regency.

The dinner attendees joined together to break bread and have an informal dialog. It was wonderful to meet members from all over the United States and to hear about their concerns and issues. One important issue discussed was the proposal on the floor of Delegate Assembly to invite Guam to become a chapter of NASW. The other issue was the revision of the NASW Position Paper



Members of the Latino Caucus attending dinner.

on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the United States.

Dr. Mayden informed us of the election of Yolanda Zayas as the first Vice President of NASW. Dr. Mayden stated that she was very happy to meet so many vibrant and interesting leaders from all over the country. Dr. Mayden was born in Baltimore, MD, and is the dean of Bryn Mawr College.

She spoke about the election year 2000 and how NASW would be more visible on Capitol Hill with our key issues and asking all candidates to respond to us through PACE.

The group discussed areas such as concerns of older Latino adults, the fiscal crisis of NASW, the lack of identification of social workers in higher offices, the need of a marketing tool by universities to use role models to increase student participation, the need to collaborate with the Council on Social Work Education, any many other issues.



A Message to the NASW Latino Caucus Members and Friends



by Sonia Palacio-Grottola, ACSW

I have received many messages from you in the past three years stating that this newsletter is a viable, informative tool for networking.

A caucus brochure was distributed a long time ago, and we receive responses from time to time that members have an interest in this form of communication and want their names added to the Latino Caucus Newsletter mailing list.

In May 1999, I was invited to meet with the National Committee on Racial & Ethnic Diversity (NCORED) to discuss the authorization, accountability, and criteria for the Latino Caucus as well as to meet other caucus chairs. The NASW proposal was discussed, and recommendations were sent to the Board

of Directors. I will keep you informed of the outcome in future newsletters.

A CALL FOR DONATIONS: The funds for sending out the Latino Caucus newsletter come from the National Committee on Racial & Ethnic Diversity (NCORED) budget. As you know, NASW-NCORED has some budget constraints, and mailing this newsletter as well as those for the other three caucuses is very expensive. That is why I am asking you for a donation to help defray the cost of the mailing and to facilitate the Latino Caucus meetings that we hold at the national conferences. It is important that we participate in the annual conference each year not only as participants but also as caucus members. Please make your donation to NASW-Latino Caucus and mail to the attention of Leticia Diaz, NASW.

It is time to put together a Steering Committee with Regional Representatives. Because Latinos are the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States, we should take a look at ways to reach out to the pool of

members for their input and contributions. I will ask the executive directors of each chapter to identify a person who would be willing to serve on the Steering Committee of the Latino Caucus. I believe we can communicate by e-mail or fax. Your contributions and comments will be appreciated greatly. ♦

WEB SITES

“PUERTO RICO AND THE AMERICAN DREAM”

is a bilingual Web site that is an informational resource on the history, culture, and politics of Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican population in the United States URL: <http://www.Pdream.com>.

Two sites that help you match your background to available scholarships:

College NET:

www.collegenet.com/about/index.html

Minority Online Information Service (MOLIS):

www.fie.com/molis/

Language Policy Web sites:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com>

homepages/jwcrawford

National Hispanic Scholarship Fund:

www.nhsf.org.

ASPIRA College/Career Advisement Program of New York, Inc.

www.aspira.org.

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

www.lulac.org.

An internet portal targeted at U.S. Hispanics

www.quepasa.com.

Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility

www.hacr.org.

National Association of Puerto Rican/Hispanic Social Workers

www.naprsw.org

NASW PRESENTED EIGHT CONSUELO GOSNELL SCHOLARSHIPS IN 1999

The NASW Board of Directors has awarded Consuelo Gosnell Memorial Scholarships totaling \$24,000 to eight MSW students who plan to pursue their careers in working with ethnic communities or in public or voluntary nonprofit agencies. We are very proud of the following students who have extraordinary backgrounds in working with Latino and Native American people:

Carlina Zeuli-Espinoza, *San Francisco State University*

Maria L. Rivera Grajales, *University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras*

Dolores Jimerson, *University of Wyoming*

Belen Martinez, *University of Chicago*

Aurea Montes, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Edgar Pretty On Top, *University of Utah, Salt Lake City*

Sharon Raynor, *Fordham University*

Diana Margarita Shay, *University of Maryland, Baltimore*

Come One, Come All!
to
The NASW National Conference
Social Work 2000

Baltimore, Maryland
November 1-4, 2000

Invitational Panel Presentation

Sponsored by the Latino Caucus

Issues that impact health, education, and welfare of the Latino communities including matters of immigration, language, and rapid population growth

Special Interest Sessions

Sponsored by the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (NCORED)

**Members of Color
Town Hall Meeting**

Constructive dialogue among NCORED, NASW, and attending members on the critical issues encountered by social workers of color and the communities where they work and represent

Panel

**“The Changing Face of America:
Diverse Populations in Transition to Majority”**

Invitational panel focusing on issues that affect ethnic communities and explore solutions for the future. Perspectives of inclusion, equality, and cultural competence will be promoted within the context of new political agendas for the 21st century

Opportunity to meet other members of the Latino Caucus

Let's Meet in Baltimore!

SAVE THE DATE

July 29 - August 2, 2000

Promoting Equitable Societies in a Global Economy: Social Work in the 21st Century, Conferencia Conjunta de la Federacion Internacional de Trabajadores Sociales y la Asociacion Internacional de Escuelas de Trabajo Social en Palais des Congres, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The official languages of the conference will be French, English, and Spanish. For information and registration: (514) 286-0855, Fax: (514) 286-6066.

October 6-8, 2000, Southgate Tower Hotel, New York

"The State of the State of Latina's Health (A Report Card On Our Health)", 28th Annual Convention sponsored by the National Conference of Puerto Rican Woman (NACOPRW). For information and registration, call Lynda Perdomo-Ayala, (631) 476-4976 or Alice Cardona, (718) 779-2504.

October 20, 2000, at LaGrange Inn in West Islip, NY

18th Annual Scholarship Awards Dinner Dance. "En Mascarados Tipicos", sponsored by the National Association of Puerto Rican/Hispanic Social Workers, Inc. (NAPRHSW). For information and reservations, please call Carmen Correa (631) 234-1991.

November 10-12, 2000, New York

28th Annual Convention, Career Fair & Expo, sponsored by the National Conference of Puerto Rican Woman (NACOPRW). The theme of the convention will be **Latina Health**. For information and registration, call, Washington, DC, office (202) 387-4716.

December 3-6, 2000, Embassy Suites Hotel, Isla Verde, Puerto Rico

Counseling and Treating People of Color Conference, sponsored by the State University at Stony Brook, School of Social Welfare. For information and registration, please contact Dr. Frances Brisbane, dean. (631) 441-2139.

April 26-27, 2001, Adelphi University, Garder City, NY

"Latino Family Conference," sponsored by the National Association of Puerto Rican/Hispanic Social Workers, Inc. (NAPRHSW) For information, call Angelina Martinez, president. (631) 544-0462.

Hispanic Heritage Month

by Alejandro Garcia

Celebrated with fiestas, parades, and speeches, **Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15)** is an annual event in which Hispanic/Latino communities throughout the United States join together to reflect on their heritage.

Much more than a simple celebration, for many Latinos, it is also a time to assess their place in this nation, the progress made in the areas of civil rights, education, socioeconomic status, and criminal justice.

Hispanics are becoming the nation's largest ethnic "minority." The Census Bureau estimates that Hispanics will account for 44 percent of the population growth between 1995 and 2025, accounting for 32 million of a national growth of 72 million during that period. Five states currently account for close to three-fourths of this nation's Hispanic population, California, Florida, Texas, New York, and Illinois, but California alone will account for 36 percent of the nation's Hispanic population in 2025. This anticipated growth is due to this group's relative youth, fertility rates, cultural practices, and immigration.

Growing numbers of Hispanics will result in greater political power, more buying power, and increased visibility. Politicians in key states such as New York, Florida, Texas, and California are becoming aware that the Hispanic vote may make the difference between victory or defeat. Top Democratic and Republican Party presidential candidates now routinely brush up on their high school Spanish. It is increasingly clear to all that "the Hispanic vote" can neither be ignored nor be assumed as a given by

either political party. And the group's diversity needs to be understood as well.

Although virtually all Latino groups are interested in immigration issues, civil rights, education, and criminal justice, some are more conservative than others. Mexican Americans in Texas and California may have different priorities than Puerto Ricans in New York City or in Puerto Rico or Cubans in Florida.

Although Hispanics have much to celebrate this year, there is still much work to do. Too many Hispanic children



and youth drop out before completing high school. Substance abuse and gang violence are major problems, as is the danger of HIV infection. Parties threatened by the growing numbers of Hispanics are promoting anti-Hispanic measures, including campaigns against bilingual education and support of anti-immigrant and English-only legislation. What anti-Hispanic parties don't realize is that Hispanic workers will soon be a major component of the work force supporting baby boomers on social security. Having well-educated Latinos in good health and with good-paying jobs will ultimately benefit not only Latinos, but all of society, because this population will be contributing its fair share to the general welfare.

Latinos continue to influence American culture in many ways. Latino foods are becoming part of the mainstream diet, and salsa is now as common as ketchup on the U.S. dining room table. Latino popular music is also coming into the mainstream, with Ricky Martin, Chayanne, Marc Anthony, Celia Cruz, Los Lobos, and Shakira becoming popular with non-Hispanic Americans. Latino authors Junot Diaz, Oscar Hijuelos, and Sandra Cisneros have caught the attention of a wide and diverse audience. Carmen Lomas Garza's paintings have captured the essence of Mexican American life in South Texas, and Luis Jimenez's massive sculptures grace many galleries, including the entrance to the National Museum of American Art in Washington, DC.

As Latinos celebrate during this month, non-Latinos in this country are invited to join in the celebration and welcome Latino music, dance, art, language, culture, food, and other richly diverse aspects of this community which is unique in its own right and an important part of these United States.

Among the positives is the fact that growing numbers of Hispanics will result in greater political power, growing buying power, and increasing visibility as a result of the distribution of Latinos throughout the United States.

We now see top Democratic and Republican Party presidential candidates brushing up on their high school Spanish to court Latino voters.

This political power is beginning to manifest itself in local, state, and national elections. No longer can that vote be ignored or assumed as a given by either political party, and that group's diversity in political orientation needs to be given careful assessment. ♦



The **First** National Social Work Summit was held in Washington, DC., in October 1998. There were more than 44 national and regional social work organizations present that explored common professional concerns and issues. Dr. Josephine Nieves, executive director of NASW, initiated this summit to build and harness the power of social work. A network has been developed of all the organizations present to share our professional issues and concerns on an ongoing basis. Eva Figueroa, president of the National Association of Puerto Rican/Hispanic Social Workers, was among the attendees.

Dr. Carlos Vidal, PhD, assistant professor and assistant dean, School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, New York, was honored as Grand Marshal of the 1999 Puerto Rican/Hispanic Day Parade, sponsored by Adelante of Suffolk County, Inc. in June 1999 in Brentwood, New York.

Sonia Palacio-Grottola, ACSW, private practitioner in Commack, New York will serve on the NASW Gosnell Scholarship Awards Committee. National NASW has announced the availability of \$20,000 in scholarships for social work students in graduate-degree programs who demonstrate a commitment to working with American Indian/Alaska Natives and Latinos and with public or voluntary nonprofit agencies. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is March 15, 2000. For information and application materials, contact Billy Langston at National NASW at 1-800-638-8799, ext. 211.

Congratulations to Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, ACSW, recently named a Research Fellow by the NIMH/CSWE Minority Fellows Program. Mr. Guilamo-Ramos is currently studying determinants of HIV risk among Latino adolescents. He is particularly interested

in how family factors affect this risk. Mr. Guilamo-Ramos is also a doctoral candidate at the School of Social Welfare at State University of New York in Albany.

Jesus Reyes has been appointed director of the Cook County (Ill.) Circuit Court's Social Service Department. United States Chief Judge Donald P. O'Connell appointed Mr. Reyes in August 1999. Mr. Reyes is a graduate of the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. He most recently served as director of the circuit court's children advocacy rooms.

Lydia Gonzalez Dross, MSW student at State University of Arizona, is serving as acting chair of the Hispanic Task Force of NASW Tempe Office.

Columbia University's School of Social Work during the 10th Anniversary of the Agustin Gonzalez Memorial Scholarship presented scholarships to Sonia Szymanski and Scott Tacoronte. The late Mr. Gonzalez, an alumnus of the school of social work, founded the Puerto Rican Family Institute in New York.

The Latino Social Work Network (LSWN) of California held a conference on November 19-20, 1999, in Burbank, California. "Celebrando-A Proud Past, An Empowered Present and Leadership for the Future) highlighted LSWN's 10-year anniversary and celebrated its accomplishments and the diversity of Latino communities. The focus was to examine the pressing social, health, and psychological needs of Latinos. For information, contact Dolores Rodriguez at (818) 784-3815 or Donna Fernandez, 1999 Program CoChair at (310) 470-6319.

On April 11, 1999, Dialogue On Race: Challenges And Opportunities Of Diversity In The Millennium was held as part of NASW's Annual Leadership

Meeting. Former NASW President Josephine Allen instituted the dialogue as a presidential initiative.

Patricia Herrera-Thomas, LSCSW, of Topeka, KS, and Mila Ruiz Tecala, LICSW, ACSW, DCSW, of Washington, DC, serve on the Private Practice Section Committee of NASW. ♦

Meeting Yolanda Zayas

by Sonia Palacio-Grottola

While visiting Puerto Rico in September, I was fortunate to meet Yolanda Zayas, who will serve as NASW's 1st vice president for the 1999-2000 program year. I was very happy to know that the campaign challenge had been resolved. A



complete detailed story appeared in the September 1999 *NASW News*. Yolanda was president of the Puerto Rico Chapter from 1994 - 1996 and continues to remain active in NASW. She is the executive director of the Office for the Integral Development of Women, for the City of San Juan. Formerly, she was executive director of Planned Parenthood and director of the Commission for Women's Affairs in the Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico. She was voted Social Worker of the Year in 1991 by the Puerto Rico Chapter and in 1992 by national NASW. Among her proudest accomplishments is the leadership she provided to the passage of Public Law 54, approved in 1989, the local equivalent to the Violence Against Women Act, for the prevention of domestic violence.

In addition to Yolanda Zayas, I was delighted to meet the executive director of the Puerto Rican Chapter, Antonio Rodriguez and his lovely wife. We had a lovely dinner at the Ajili Mojili Restaurant in Condado, Puerto Rico. The chapter has more than 200 members and is growing steadily. ♦

Where Are Latino's in the New Television Season?

by Alejandro Garcia, PhD*

Committed to improving the representation of Latinos in television-both in front and behind the camera-the National Latino Media Council NLMC has held a brownout. Why? As Americans view the new television season, they will see that none of the major television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX) have any Latinos-or other people of color-in a major role in any of their new shows. No wonder the NLMC has decide to hold a "brownout" of these networks on September 12 through September 26. This "Brownout" essentially encourages Latinos not to watch these networks during this time.

The NLMC is an umbrella organization of major Latino organizations, which include the National Council of La Raza, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Puerto Rican Coalition, and the Cuban American National Council, among other major Latino organizations throughout the United States. The NLMC is committed to improving the representation of Latinos in television-both in front and behind the camera.

Many Latinos have complained that, over the years, the networks have virtually ignored Latinos in their programming. Latinos will soon become the largest ethnic minority group in the United States, but their growing presence has virtually gone unnoticed by the

major networks. Don't Latinos warrant television programs in which they are major characters? Don't Latinos have any sense of humor worth including in a comedy series? Don't Latinos have the lives that warrant the development of a dramatic series on television? How is it possible to have an animated series about a family in Texas without any Latino characters? Over one-fourth of that states residents are Latinos, but the current series makes it appear that Latinos don't exist in Texas.



Misrepresentation of Latinos has also occurred, with a tendency to portray Latinos as ignorant, servants, farm hands, illegal immigrants,

lazy, drug users, among other negative qualities. The latest ethnic slur was edited at the last minute when NBC decided that Latinos might take offense if a Latina maid in a "Will and Grace" episode was called a "tamale."

Latinos need to see positive role models on television. They need to see characters that look like them, that live like them, that reflect positive aspects of the Latino communities in the United States. In addition, non-Latinos also need to see positive images of Latinos. Their negative images-or nonexistent images-of Latinos need to be challenged. Since many Americans spend several hours a day in front of their television sets, television could serve as an excellent entertainment and educational tool about Latinos. The creation of Latino characters and programming is only a beginning for the television networks. They need to hire Latino actors, writers, directors, and producers.

The major television networks and commercial sponsors can no longer ignore Latinos. If they are not moved by the need to better represent Latinos on television, then perhaps they need to recognize the increasing buying power of Latinos. These parties should be warned that further ignorance of Latinos will have a negative impact on their pocket books.♦

Book Review

The Person-in-Environment System (PIE) manual translated into Spanish language is ready to be distributed to interested social workers. The Spanish version of PIE can standardize social work problem definitions across all Spanish speaking countries. This will help clients by having social workers speaking the same language in defining their problems across national and international lines. The price is \$10.00 plus \$2.75 (\$5.00 outside the U.S.) for shipping and handling. Send check to NASW, Puerto Rico Chapter, P.O. Box 192051, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00919-2051, attn: **Antonio S. Rodriguez, ACSW**, Executive Director.



Hispanic Scholarship Directory: WPR Publishing, 1999 (\$19.95). To order, call 760/434-7474. **Multicultural Issues in Social Work - Practice and Research**, edited by Patricia L. Ewalt, Edith M. Freeman, Anne E. Fortune, Dennis L. Poole, and Stanley L. Witkin. This book outlines new strategies for helping diverse groups and communities gain their voices and enhance their capabilities. ISBN: 0-87101-302-9, January 1999, #3029, 710 pages. NASW members \$33.55 / Nonmembers \$41.95. To order, call toll free 1-800-227-3590 and refer to code 62099. ♦

* Alejandro Garcia is professor, School of Social Work, Syracuse University.