



LATINOS UNIDOS OF IOWA, INC., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Newsletter co-editors: Lena Robison & Lee Searles. Spanish translation: Ann Morris. Web: [www.latinosunidosofiowa.com](http://www.latinosunidosofiowa.com). Email: [IowaLatina@msn.com](mailto:IowaLatina@msn.com)

**MISSION STATEMENT: "We are a diverse organization that promotes a united community, positive change, and achievement."**

## FIRST-QUARTER NEWSLETTER 2007

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Books in Spanish/DMPL

Work & Services Fairs

Conference

Special Events

Food & Dinners

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### A WORD FROM VICE PRESIDENT LEE SEARLES

This newsletter arrives very late. It should have been ready by the end of March. I have been swamped with things to do, as many of us have been. Life only seems to get busier and busier. Unfortunately, the lateness of this issue means that several Latinos Unidos and community events already have happened.

There is an old saying, quoted to me as a Chinese curse, that says, "May you live in interesting times." This year has already been very interesting, mostly in good ways. For one, we are very happy that President Lena Avila Robison is back in good health and ready to move us forward.

We held a successful Employment and Community Resource Fair on April 22, at Our Lady of the Americas/Visitation Church. We had a good response from participating vendors across a wide range of businesses and services. Our hope is that the October Fair at the HOLA Center is even better.

For the first time, Latinos Unidos held a spring plant "sale" at La Tapatía on Des Moines Street, on May 5. We had planned to continue on Sunday, May 6, but the weather did not cooperate. We received about \$150 in donations for the plants on Saturday, and more the next day, with money going to our scholarship program.

Planning for the conference on September 15 is proceeding nicely. We will focus on health care issues, with an emphasis on diabetes and high blood pressure. The conference likely will include presentations, workshops, and screening clinics for diabetes, high blood pressure, lead poisoning, and other health-related topics. Read the next newsletter for details.

Scholarship grant applications are going out to sponsors, and applications for scholarships from students are coming in. Please encourage anyone you know who might benefit to apply for a scholarship.

## LATINOS UNIDOS EVENTS & NEWS

### ↳ **SAVE THE DATES: General Business Meetings in 2007**

Latinos Unidos holds its monthly business meetings on the second Thursday of each month, at 6 pm in Building 3, Des Moines Area Community College's Urban Campus. Urban Campus is located at 1100 7<sup>th</sup> St. near the Holiday Inn and old Roberts Dairy property. Future dates include: June 14, July 12, August 9, & September 13

Members & interested persons are welcome to attend. Usually we have one or more guests from community organizations who speak about what they are doing. The agenda also includes items for which community and member input is vital.

### ↳ **Membership Dues**

A reminder that your individual (\$15) and family (\$25) membership dues for 2007 can be paid at any time. Organizational dues are \$75. Your membership fee provides an operating budget, supports our activities, and gives you a way to affect the lives of Hispanics, Latinos, and the broader Des Moines community.

The membership year now runs from January 1 to December 31 of each year. The dues payment is fully tax deductible.

### ↳ **Board & Officer Changes**

We welcome José Ramos, managing editor of *El Latino Newspaper*, as our new Member of the Board.

The office of Secretary remains open. If you would like to nominate someone, please email Lena Robison ([IowaLatina@msn.com](mailto:IowaLatina@msn.com)) or Lee Searles ([searleslr@msn.com](mailto:searleslr@msn.com)). The Secretary attends all meetings or arranges for a substitute, maintains the records of meetings, distributes meeting minutes by email, and plays a key role in organizing and staffing events.

### ↳ **Scholarships for 2007**

Latinos Unidos happily offers its scholarship program for Latinas and Latinos who want to attend a college- or university-level institution in the state of Iowa. The combined Mercy College/Latinos Unidos scholarship supports one recipient each year to attend the Mercy College of Health Sciences. Several applicants typically receive the Latinos Unidos scholarship. Current scholarship applications are available from Lee Searles (email [searleslr@msn.com](mailto:searleslr@msn.com) or call 515-979-6457) or Lena Robison ([IowaLatina@msn.com](mailto:IowaLatina@msn.com), 515-279-6457) to request forms and information.

### ↳ **SAVE THE DATE: Latinos Unidos Volunteer Picnic, July 15, 4 to 7 p.m.**

Fun! Games! People! Conversation! Networking! It's our annual picnic for volunteers, friends, sponsors, & interested people. It's also time to relax & enjoy what we hope will be a sunny, not-so-hot summer day. The picnic will be at the Union Park West Shelter, on Thompson Avenue. Bring a dish to share. Hot dogs and buns will be provided. RSVP to Lena Robison at 515-279-6840 ([IowaLatina@msn.com](mailto:IowaLatina@msn.com)) if you're coming.

### ↳ **SAVE THE DATE: Latinos Unidos Conference 2007**

A planning group has begun working out the details of our conference, to be held on September 15 at the State Historical Museum, 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines. Current plans call for a keynote speaker, the involvement of area health service institutions and professionals, & free health clinics. There will be short presentations/workshops on a rotating schedule, offered in English & Spanish.

The annual Latinos Unidos Scholarship Awards Ceremony will take place at the conference. The recipients will be recognized with the award of the scholarship & a certificate. This event is a high point of the year because the scholarships go toward promoting higher education & all its benefits. Latinos Unidos takes great pride in the successes of its scholarship recipients.

### ↳ **WATCH THE SECOND-QUARTER NEWSLETTER FOR...**

... more information about the fall conference, date and time for the next Resource Fair, our holiday gift basket, a guest article, and much, much more.



These are pictures from the April 22<sup>nd</sup> Employment & Community Resource Fair. From left to right: Mike Smith represented the American Institute of Business. A group engages in conversation around the Arbonne Health & Beauty products table. Veridian Credit Union provided a grant to support the Fair and staffed a table.

## RESEARCH ON LATINOS IN THE U.S.

- The Pew Hispanic Center recently released an advisory in which it described the use of the Internet by Latinos in the United States. According to the advisory, a little more than half of Latinos use online services. This rate of use is well below the rates for other cultural and ethnic groups. Latinos who use the Internet tend to be English-dominant or English/Spanish bilingual. Interestingly, birth in the U.S. is strongly tied to higher use of the Web, email, and other online services, suggesting that social factors (peer group influence, early school environment) play a large role. Completion of high school, and especially a college degree, are tied to greater online use.

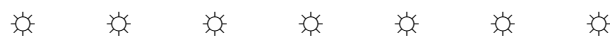
For Mexican citizens in the U.S., this study has important consequences. The Mexican national government is setting up *Plazas comunitarias* in the U.S. so that citizens of Mexico can complete their primary, secondary, and *bachelato* certificates by Internet and in-class study. There is an effort to create at least one *Plaza* in the Des Moines area. Also, by reciprocal agreement between Mexico and some other Central American countries, citizens of those countries can obtain educational certificates through the Mexican government that are recognized in those other countries.

If you are interested in learning more about the *Plazas comunitarias*, please go to the Web site for CONEVYT, [www.conevyt.org.mx](http://www.conevyt.org.mx), or contact the Consulate of Mexico, 3552 Dodge St., Omaha, NE, 68131 (402-595-1842). Watch future issues of this newsletter for information about local *Plazas* as they develop.

The Pew Hispanic Center advisory can be read at [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org).

- A report from the Center for Education and Society at Indiana University presents conclusions about approaches taken in two Indiana communities to integrate Latino newcomers. The study suggests that successful integration comes from (1) long-term investment and collaboration from community leaders and businesses, (2) a need for ongoing support from municipal services, (3) regular community forums for sharing and learning across cultures, (4) redefinition of “community” to break down obstacles created by “us” versus “them” thinking, (5) collaboration among a wide range of agencies, organizations, and educational institutions to promote educational success for newcomers.

If these conclusions strike you as similar to the goals and mission of Latinos Unidos, then you have made an important connection here in central Iowa.



***If you have an idea for something you'd like to see in an upcoming issue of the Latinos Unidos Newsletter, please contact any of following: Lee Searles, 515-979-6457, [lsearles@att.net](mailto:lsearles@att.net). Ann Morris, [morrisad6812@msn.com](mailto:morrisad6812@msn.com). Lena Robison, [IowaLatina@aol.com](mailto:IowaLatina@aol.com), 515-279-6840.***

## *Special Feature: Educational Needs and the Des Moines Public Schools*

Amy J. Campos, *former Case Manager, DMPS Success Program*

My experience working with the Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) enabled me to witness the importance of having bilingual staff and the continuous struggle to provide services that meet the needs of non-English speakers. I was a member of the Latino Advisory Committee (a committee affiliated with the Des Moines Public Schools that works with administrators to resolve concerns or issues that Latino students, families, and community members have), which has a unique relationship that has played an important role in the school district through years of dialogue. There still remain areas that need to be addressed in order for Latino non-English and English speakers to understand how the Des Moines Public School District functions and the importance of cultural diversity awareness.

Positive growth in the Des Moines Public Schools includes a Latino administrator, an additional Latino Liaison to assist families, a credit recovery program with an ESL/ELL component, a half-time ESL/ELL site at Hiatt Middle School, Spanish courses for receptionists, and the Teacher Quality Program (TQP). The TQP provides community members the opportunity to study for a teaching degree in order to diversify the education profession. These are all responses to community concerns that precede my involvement, but at the same time I hope that years will no longer be a precedent to future questions this community presents.

There are still areas that need to be addressed. Those fall in the categories of diversity awareness for all employees of the Des Moines Public School District, and the importance of providing documents and information (for example, report cards, illnesses circulating the buildings, Special Education reports) in Spanish. The schools need to provide competent and essential information regarding this community to employees of the DMPS because of incidents over the years, ranging from school buses to the school buildings themselves. All these warrant diversity awareness training. Forms and documents in other languages, like the examples provided above, are the primary sources that show a student's academic progress. What does a non-English speaking parent gain, if he or she cannot interpret the information?

While there are issues within the DMPS, the larger Latino community and its friends must come to terms with the question, "Are we committed and doing enough to promote a sustaining effort to ensure Latino academic excellence?" I would encourage you to take the time to consider participating in the Latino Advisory Committee (LAC) because there is always a need for more community support. Most importantly, without education, what future does this community? I am a staunch supporter of the DREAM (IOWA) Act, but a harsh reality is that, because of the lack of academic preparedness in course requirements for higher institutions of learning, many students will not succeed when opportunities present themselves today.

If you would like more information about the Latino Advisory Committee, contact Connie Kidman, the Latino Liaison with the Des Moines Public Schools, at 515-242-8236, or Alex Piedras at Grand View College, 515-263-2800.



*Resource Fair: Alison & Carlos from Lowe's, Our Lady of the Americas, & Juan Garcia from Iowa Student Loan..*



## A LITTLE HISTORY LESSON: THE BRACERO PROGRAM

Relations between the United States and Latin American countries have centered on three interests during the past two centuries: the need for low-cost laborers, mainly in low-skilled agricultural occupations; growing demands for resources such as tropical foods and woods; and political security in the hemisphere. These were topics during President George Bush's recent visit to Latin America.

The history of temporary labor migration from Mexico in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is tied closely to current debates over immigration and US foreign policy. Public debates over undocumented workers and comprehensive immigration reform continue in the US.

In the 1800s, the manufacturing jobs in US cities drew many rural people into cities. This change created an agricultural labor shortage that could not be met by the remaining young people. Examples from US history demonstrate how migration filled these needs for workers: the arrival of Chinese men after the Civil War (1861-1865) to help build railroads and work on California farms; the movement of Black Americans from the rural South to northern cities and to small Midwestern towns with coal mining in the early 1900s; the unrestricted movement of Mexican citizens into the US as agricultural laborers starting in the late 1800s and for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

With US support of England against Nazi Germany (1939-1941) and formal entry into World War II (December 1941), there was a push to increase agricultural production in the farming states of the Midwest, Plains, and far west. Many men and women worked industrial jobs in the cities and joined the military, and rural areas experienced labor shortages. Informal migration from Latin America became official US policy as the "Bracero" program, formally known as the *Agreement of August 4, 1942, for the Temporary Migration of Mexican Agricultural Workers to the United States*.

Most migrations have "pull" factors in the receiving locations (economic opportunities and safety) and "push" factors in the home countries (political oppression, lack of employment). After Mexico's 1910 revolution, hopes were high that land reforms and basic opportunities would take place very soon. However, the changes did not take place until the 1930s, and even then were incomplete. "Push" and "pull" factors existed on both sides of the Mexico-US border.

Ciudad Juárez (in the state of Coahuila, Mexico), El Paso (Texas), and other border towns blossomed into major cities in part because of the *braceros* who traveled north to these crossing points. Many were already experienced farm laborers. In the US, the *bracero* men cultivated cotton, cucumbers, sugar beets, tomatoes, and other crops. Their labor was under contract, but the contracts were usually written in English, and rarely did anyone bother to translate for the workers. One result was that the contractual agreements often contained very exploitive conditions concerning pay, employers' responsibilities for the health of workers, and the hours of work.

In wide use among the "arms" (the literal meaning of *bracero*) was the short-handled hoe. The wooden handle was cut off, forcing a worker to bend over for many hours a day, walking rows of sugar beets or cotton. Often men experienced severe back trouble and could not return after two or three years. There were reports in some towns that public toilets were locked up on weekends, when *braceros* came to town for supplies and recreation, and so dysentery broke out. No bathing facilities were made available to men who had worked in the hot sun for five and six days a week.

During these years stereotypes about "dirty," "lazy" Mexicans emerged in the US. They persist today. The stereotypes ignore how the *braceros* labored under harsh conditions to maintain and increase the pace of agricultural production, and these images also ignore how the Mexican workers were shut out from even basic self-care that we take for granted.

The peak years for *bracero* labor came between 1951 and 1964, well after World War II, as the need for farm labor continued. Interestingly, there were Mexican workers coming to the US through 1967, even though the program officially ended in 1963.

Today, as immigration reform is debated, some critics compare a temporary worker program to the *bracero* program. They suggest that, with little or no enforcement of labor rules, temporary workers again will be subject to demeaning working conditions and abusive employers.

## EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES, & RESOURCES

- **INTERNSHIPS:** A wide variety of summer & fall internships are available from Iowa companies & organizations. A list is available at the Iowa Society of Certified Public Accountants (ISCPA) web site, <http://www.iacpa.org/students/internships.htm>. The companies include sponsors of Latinos Unidos such as Bankers Trust, Hy-Vee Foods, & The Principal Financial Group.  
For Bankers Trust internships in accounting & finance contact Sharon Gaddy-Hanna at 515-245-2406 or email [shanna@bankerstrust.com](mailto:shanna@bankerstrust.com).  
Hy-Vee offers internships in accounting. For more information, visit the web site, [www.hy-vee.com](http://www.hy-vee.com), and contact Nathan Stucky, Human Resources, at 515-267-2906 or [nstucky@hy-vee.com](mailto:nstucky@hy-vee.com).  
The Principal's internships are in accounting, finance, & Management Information Systems (MIS). Contact Christine Gustafson, 515-247-7944 or [gustafson.christine@principal.com](mailto:gustafson.christine@principal.com).
- **EMPLOYMENT:** The Principal Financial Group frequently has openings in which Spanish fluency is a requirement or a strength. Check Principal's employment Web site for position openings, an online application procedure, and other information, at [www.principal.com/careers/](http://www.principal.com/careers/). Or contact Claudia Schabel, Diversity Specialist: [Schabel.Claudia@principal.com](mailto:Schabel.Claudia@principal.com) or 515-362-1202.
- **WORKFORCE TRAINING:** Des Moines Area Community College's Community and Workforce Partnership offers a Workforce Training Academy. Enrollment is based on household income and number of persons in the household. Contact either Kay Maher-Sharp (515-697-7710, [klmaher-sharp@dmacc.edu](mailto:klmaher-sharp@dmacc.edu)) or Lisa King (515-697-7705, [lking1@dmacc.edu](mailto:lking1@dmacc.edu)), both of whom also speak Spanish.
- **COMMUNITY HISTORY DAY, May 21:** The State Historical Society will hold events at the Historical Museum, 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines, from 8 am to 3:15 pm. In addition, Latinos Unidos encourages you to contribute something toward the community where you live by recording the stories of the Hispanic/Latino presence in Iowa.
- **CIVIL & HUMAN RIGHTS HEARING:** The Iowa Civil Rights Commission and the Marshalltown Human Rights Commission are holding a Community Hearing on Tuesday, May 22, from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. The hearing takes place in DeJardin Hall, Iowa Valley Community College, 3700 S. Center St., Marshalltown. Public comment is welcome in person or in writing, although a written text is requested before the hearing in any case. To register to speak, contact Joan James with the MHRC (641-754-5527, [joan.james@citizensbanking.com](mailto:joan.james@citizensbanking.com)). Send written comments or a written text of spoken comments to Jennifer Fath with the ICRC (1-800-457-4416, ext. 13041, [Jennifer.fath@iowa.gov](mailto:Jennifer.fath@iowa.gov)).
- **CULTURAL ENRICHMENT GRANT:** The Greater Des Moines Partnership offers its BRAVO Cultural Enrichment Grant to non-profit organizations (501/c/3 tax status) that serve "new and underserved audiences." For information about grant priorities and eligibility, and for downloadable application materials, visit this Web page: [www.desmoinesfoundation.org/page33323.cfm](http://www.desmoinesfoundation.org/page33323.cfm). The deadline for applications is Noon, June 1. The grants are determined on a competitive basis.
- **ARTS GRANT:** The Iowa Arts Council makes available up to three "Arts Build Communities in Schools (ABCs)" grants each year, to support links between artists, arts organizations, and local schools. More information about the ABCs Grant is available at this Arts Council Web page: <http://www.iowaartscouncil.org/funding/abcs-grant/index.shtml>, and the Web site offers information about grants, grant-writing, and arts-related events.
- **SCHOLARSHIP:** United Way of Iowa & Elevate (a program of Children & Families of Iowa) offer "Scholarships Toward Achieving and Reaching Success" (STARS) to person through age 25 in Dallas, Polk, & Warren Counties. The STARS scholarships may be used for summer camps, music lessons, child care, driver's education classes, summer classes, career services, certain organizational memberships, and other purposes. The application deadline is June 5. More information, including application materials may be found at [www.elevate2inspire.com](http://www.elevate2inspire.com).

### Special Events so far in 2007

*Latinos Unidos Employment & Community Resource Fair, Our Lady of the Americas, April 22*  
*Latinos Unidos Plant Sale, Tienda La Tapatía, May 5 & 6*

## *Special Feature: Introducing Claudia Thrane*

I am Claudia Thrane, and I am originally from Mexico. I moved from Cancun to Des Moines in 2000. Currently I work as a Youth Counselor for the Juvenile Court System.

During the course of my work with youth, I realized that after-school activities are paramount to keep youngsters out of trouble. I formed a soccer team, "Latino Dreams." It started as a team of young gang members who, I am proud to say, now are former gang members. Keeping the team moving forward has been very difficult because each season we struggle to get the necessary funding. However, since 2003, our first year, we have managed to go from being at the bottom to achieving third place in 2006. When our youth know that somebody cares, they respond.

It has been a very challenging but rewarding journey!

*Claudia has been very involved with youth, as she notes. Her work requires patience and dedication. I had the pleasure of meeting her in 2004, after being referred by Alex Piedras at Grand View College. I know that Claudia would appreciate your support: volunteering, providing sponsorships for the soccer team, and working with her to help Latino youth find their direction. She can be reached at this cell phone number: (515) 201-3189. – LMS*



*Gloria Cano speaks with a visitor about Iowa Workforce Development's programs. Michael Piper and Carrier Mulvihill represented Des Moines Area Community College; Michael directs the Interpretation & Translation Program, & Carrie instructs Spanish. Rosamaria Hullett talks with a visitor about Wells Fargo's financial services.*



## ***GET INVOLVED: COMMUNITY FORUMS ON THE DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS***

The State Public Policy Group is holding community forums in June to gather public comment. Any resident of the school district may attend a forum and speak to an issue. The Des Moines School Board uses comments from the public in its planning. Here are the scheduled forums:

Sat., June 2, 10 am to 12 Noon: Merrill Middle School Cafeteria, 5301 Grand Ave.

Mon., June 4, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Hoover High School Cafeteria, 4800 Aurora Ave.

Tues., June 5, 9 to 11 am, Hoyt Middle School Cafeteria, 2700 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> St.

Wed., June 6, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: East High School Cafeteria, 815 E. 13<sup>th</sup> St.

Sat., June 9, 10 am to 12 Noon: Willard Elementary School Cafeteria, 2941 Dean Ave.

*Continued on next page*

Mon., June 11, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: North High School Cafeteria, 501 Holcomb Ave.  
Tues., June 12, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: Roosevelt High School Cafeteria, 4419 Center St.  
Wed., June 13, 6:30 to 8:30 pm: McCombs Middle School Cafeteria, 210 County Line Rd.



## Important Notice Regarding Temporary Protected Status

According to a release from the Department of Homeland Security, the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) that is granted to eligible nationals from El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua will be extended for eighteen months. The status was scheduled to expire on July 5, 2007, for Hondurans and Nicaraguans, and on September 9, 2007, for El Salvadorans. The re-registration periods have not yet begun. The Federal Register and US Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) should receive information on open periods, as should immigration attorneys and others who provide legal services.

Extensions also apply to citizens from several countries outside Latin America.

## Our Heart-Felt Thanks To Our Sponsors & Volunteers: *You Make Our Work Possible*

Oscar Argueta, *El Heraldo*  
Bankers Trust  
Nicole Bleckwehl, Wells Fargo (Minneapolis)  
Lia Brown, Democratic National Party  
Amy Campos, Des Moines Public Schools  
Catholic Pastoral Center, Des Moines Diocese  
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Sue Nelson, Veridian  
Jennifer Nostrala, Simpson College  
Dr. José & Betty Olivencia (The Iowa Vein  
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Our Lady of the Americas Parish  
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