

LATINO OUTREACH ACTIVITIES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Archdiocese of Hartford

School Boards/Committees

- ❖ Latino school community members invited to **serve on School Board**. (These Latino Board members have made significant contributions; they are a driving force in the increase of Latino enrollment.)
- ❖ **Latino Enrollment Committee** created, consisting of Latinos from parish and school.
- ❖ **“Hola Amigos”** program developed: a “buddy program” for Spanish speaking students that assists with their acculturation. New students feel welcomed; current students feel valued; teachers serve as partners in welcoming process.
- ❖ **Advisory Committee** created; consists of Latino alumni, current parents and friends of school.
- ❖ **Outreach to Hispanic graduates** initiated to highlight their accomplishments and enlist their assistance in recruiting new families.
- ❖ **Latino Parent Ambassador Program** created.
- ❖ School **Inclusion Committee** developed; comprised of faculty and students; impacts school activities, curriculum, events, etc.; students encouraged to embrace others’ differences and celebrate diversity.
- ❖ **Hispanic Alumni Task Force** created.
- ❖ Spanish-speaking members added to existing **Recruitment Committee**.

Events

- ❖ **“Latino Showcase”** hosted after Mass, featuring school reps with poster boards, marketing materials (in Spanish), video, speakers, refreshments, and a raffle. Yielded six interested students.
- ❖ **“International Night”** or “Open House Around the World” hosted; each class highlights a country, celebrating the culture and the food. Open to current and prospective families.
- ❖ **“Family Eat-Out Nights”** planned at different ethnic restaurants.
- ❖ **Lenten dinners** featuring Latino food hosted.
- ❖ Culturally **diverse speakers** invited to present at school.
- ❖ **Latino holidays and Saints Days** celebrated (Las Posadas, El dia de los muertos, Cinco de Mayo), increasing student cultural awareness.
- ❖ **Open house** specifically for Latino families hosted on a Sunday, in conjunction with outreach at the Mass.
- ❖ School reps attended the 3-day **Latino Enrollment Institute** at the Univ. of Notre Dame.
- ❖ **Spanish Masses** hosted in conjunction with Christmas, Epiphany, Our Lady of Guadalupe feast day, etc. Receptions follow Mass and attract great attendance from Spanish community.
- ❖ **Parent/Faculty Meeting** hosted; parents shared things about their culture with faculty and relationships were built.

Physical Plant/School Changes

- ❖ School **signage in Spanish** added.
- ❖ Spanish elements integrated into **Mass**.
- ❖ Older trophies in **trophy case** replaced with items meaningful to the cultures represented within the school's enrollment (statues, nativities, Bibles, etc.)
- ❖ **Multi-cultural bulletin board** created and alternated each month to reflect the cultures of the student population. (Promotes family engagement, a sense of pride, and good PR for prospective parents touring the school.)
- ❖ School **voicemail and emails** created in Spanish.
- ❖ Latino **volunteer walked through** the school building and made recommendations on changes that would make the school more welcoming to the Latino community, more "Latino Friendly."
- ❖ **"Welcome" signs** placed in different languages placed above each classroom door (based on nationalities of school students).
- ❖ **"Comfort Zone"** created, offering a welcoming space for visitors where children can read or play and the parents/visitors can communicate in Spanish.

Resources

- ❖ **Spanish-speaking staff person** added to main office.
- ❖ **Buses** hired to transport students to school from areas with high Latino residency.
- ❖ Elements of Spanish culture, language and prayers integrated into the **school curriculum** so all students can learn them.
- ❖ **Translators** made available to Spanish-speaking families – either bi-lingual office staff, faculty, or parent volunteers.
- ❖ **Parent workshops** offered in areas such as medical/health, insurance, parenting, and how to access State resources.
- ❖ A school **"Madrina"** or **"Padrino"** identified to assist with recruitment: an increase in Latino families visiting and enrolling resulted.
- ❖ Latino students served as student **ambassadors and tour guides**.
- ❖ Spanish teacher, a native of Puerto Rico, **skyped** with children in Puerto Rico to connect with her students.
- ❖ Aspects of the Latino culture incorporated into **Art classes**.
- ❖ Middle school **researched Spanish-speaking countries** and presented exhibition on them for school/parent community.
- ❖ **Bi-lingual priest** assigned to parish/school.
- ❖ Parents provided with **all school forms** and the website in Spanish; has resulted in more family involvement and willingness to call with questions.
- ❖ **Spanish language classes** offered to grades PK – 8.
- ❖ **Identified all nationalities** represented in the school and featured their cultures as well; know your school community!

Financial and Parish Support

- ❖ The “**empty-seat**” or “**justice**” **tuition model** being gradually initiated.
- ❖ Local **Latino businesses cultivated** to assist with the tuition needs of Latino students, in order to create a Student Scholarship Program and to offer highly reduced tuitions.
- ❖ Hispanic parishioners started a **tuition assistance fund** to help offset the cost of tuition for Latino families.
- ❖ Monitored and **assisted with financial aid applications.**
- ❖ Support of local Latino organizations made **free tuition** possible for some families and built relationships throughout the local community.

Recruitment Efforts

- ❖ **Recruitment materials in Spanish** provided.
- ❖ **Ads** (in Spanish) taken in Latino publications (i.e. La Voz Hispana), on Latino radio/TV stations.
- ❖ **Translation feature** added to website.
- ❖ Latino students, alumni, and parents utilized in **testimonials** promoting the school.
- ❖ **Direct mailing** postcard targeting Latino families in feeder parishes sent, but was not as successful as hoped.
- ❖ Testimonials from Latino families added to the **website homepage.**
- ❖ **Latino graduates** and their accomplishments featured on the website and social media.
- ❖ **Parish Director of Religious Ed** asked to inform the school of Latino families in that program so the school can reach out.
- ❖ **Home Visits** initiated.
- ❖ Advertised school at local, **Latino-owned businesses** (identified by parishioner/parent recommendations); encouraged **student sponsorship programs** with these businesses.
- ❖ **Sunday outreach** to parishes with large Latino populations initiated in order to reach those families that are at Church for a good portion of the day.
- ❖ **Colombian Chaplain** assigned to the high school.
- ❖ Approached **Latino, Evangelical Christian or Missionary Families** to encourage their interest and re-engage them.