



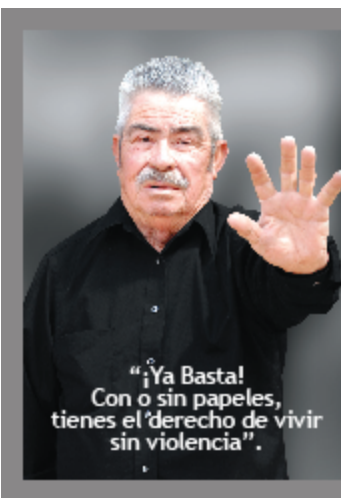
Newsletter Summer
2008

Enlace Comunitario

An Update From the Director: Reaching our Mission

What can we do to truly eliminate domestic violence in the Latino immigrant community? The staff and board of Enlace have engaged in a year long process of reflection, research and strategic thinking to answer this question.

At the beginning of this process staff and board agreed that to eliminate domestic violence Enlace can't rely only on



providing services but that it is imperative that we put more emphasis on prevention. As part of this process we shared with several Latino groups around the nation, who also work on the elimination of domestic violence, their promising approaches to primary prevention.

Last month we had a two day retreat where staff and board reviewed the different ap-

proaches. We decided that in the next three years we will develop a multidisciplinary and comprehensive prevention approach aimed at changing the cultural norms in our community and overall structural and systemic barriers that allow and promote the occurrence of domestic violence.

Some of the ideas we decided to explore further include: engaging men and boys in our prevention work; strengthening our leadership development programs for women; and enhancing our work with youth. In the next six months we will conduct interviews with former clients and other members of the community to assess the best ways to engage men, empower women and work with youth.

I invite you to be part of this exciting process by sharing your ideas and experiences with us.

Gracias,

Inside this issue:

Immigrants and Public Benefits	2
Breaking the Cycle	2
Promotoras	2
LGBTQI Pride Event	3
MALSA Award	3
Women's Day Update	3
Father's Day Special	4

Housing for All! By Natalie Smith, EC Case Manager

I am writing this article to address an issue that affects many families in our community: the lack of affordable housing. Although values of homes have fallen on the housing market, there are still many people who cannot afford basic living arrangements.

Our clients at Enlace Comunitario face many barriers to securing affordable housing as immigrants and victims of domestic violence. There is a lot of confusion about how immigrant victims of domestic violence can qualify for the

housing services available in our community. Sadly, these services are extremely limited and some programs are still unaffordable. For example, in Albuquerque there are only two transitional housing programs. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is decreasing the availability of funds for transitional housing.

Enlace Comunitario is advocating for agencies to provide services to all victims of domestic violence, regardless of their immigration status. We want to know if you have ex-

perienced barriers to housing services because of your status as a victim or as an immigrant so that we can fight for your rights. Please call Enlace Comunitario at 246-8972 or El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos at 246-1627 to report the obstacles you have faced.

We want to know if you have experienced barriers to housing services because of your status as a victim or as an immigrant!

Public Benefits for Immigrants

By Liz Luevano, EC Office Administrator

There are many myths about immigrants and public benefits. Public benefits include food stamps, Medicaid, housing assistance, and cash assistance, among others. The biggest myth is that immigrants take advantage of public benefits for which they don't qualify. In fact, immigrants who qualify for benefits avail themselves of fewer benefits than U.S. citizens.

Another myth is that applying for benefits will negatively affect your chances of fixing your papers in the future. There are only some benefits that can negatively affect your immigration status. For example, immigration authorities may classify you as a public charge if you depend on cash assistance as your only source of income. However,

benefits for food, housing, and healthcare will not affect your status because these benefits are basic needs. In general, benefits for your citizen family members will have no affect on your own status.

If you are an immigrant and need help, it is important for you to be well informed about your rights when you apply for benefits. You must know if you are a qualified immigrant or a non-qualified immigrant depending on your status. Keep in mind that there are still benefits available to non-qualified immigrants. Also, if you don't qualify for some benefits, you may be able to apply for benefits for your children and other family members based on their status.

Training with Casa Esperanza

By Sandra Ortsman, Director of DV Services

On June 9 and 10, Enlace and El Centro staff members spent two days training with Lumarie Orozco and Maria Pabon from Casa Esperanza in Minnesota. Our goal was to strengthen our respective Promotoras leadership programs. During the training Enlace staff clarified the goals of our Promotoras Program: **To serve as a bridge between Enlace and immigrant community; Latina immigrants (clients) develop personal and community leadership capacity; To work with the community to eliminate domestic violence through violence prevention and healthy relating education.** No small goals, but we are extremely excited. Our next steps include sending Blanca Pedigo, our new Outreach and Training Associate to Minnesota to be a participant in Casa Esperanza's training. Stay tuned for more updates!



Maria (Top, El Centro), Maria and Lumarie (Casa Esperanza)

Breaking the Cycle

By Anna Barrios, EC Counselor

Many times we hear the question; "Is domestic violence passed from one generation to the next?" The answer to this question is yes and no.

Anyone can find themselves in a relationship where there is domestic violence since it is not limited to a gender, culture, socio-economic status or belief system. However, what took place in a family of origin can affect a person's ability to recognize and leave an abusive relationship. The impact of families can be explained if we think that people who have touched our lives have been a mirror for us. If we are brought

up reflecting ourselves in parents who send distorted and sad messages of who we are we are more likely to accept and not recognizes distortions when we enter into relationships as adults.

I invite you to begin a journey of healing and begin to challenge the messages from the past. It can be a painful process but it is full of possibilities. We can learn to recognize healthier relationships in the present and at the same time prepare our children as they grow and make decisions for their future.

Enlace Comunitario International Women's Day Campaign Was A Huge Success: \$14,766 Raised Congratulations to everyone who was honored!

**Enlace Goes to the LGBTQI Pride Festival!
By Miriam Esparza, EC Public Ally Volunteer**

I've been attending the LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex) pride festival since 2004. I always walk around and take information from the different booths they have there. Last year when I started working at Enlace Comunitario and learned about Domestic Violence (DV), I started thinking about the big lack of information on DV amongst the LGBTQI community. Many people believe that DV does not happen in same sex relationships, and even those who are in same sex relationships do not believe they can be victims.

There are also immigrant victims in the LGBTQI community, who have to deal with being a minority twice- who have to face being oppressed for being LGBTQI; hide because of legal status; and are forced to stay with an abusive partner because of all the already mentioned barriers. This year I decided to get the word out and help people understand that DV does happen in same sex relationships. I got together with Young Women United and had a booth at the LGBTQI 2008 Pride Festival. I hope next year Enlace Comunitario gets the opportunity to be at the festival and be a success like this year.

Immigration Tips for Advocates Training

On April 11, 2008, Enlace Comunitario and El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos paired up and hosted "Immigration Tips for Advocates Training." More than 120 service providers and allies from across the state took the training which covered understanding the immigration system, detention and detainment issues, documentation of abuse and working with immigrant survivors of domestic violence. **Thanks to El Mezquite Grocers and Frutería del Río for their generous food donations!**



Enlacersos party it up at the MALSA awards Dinner. Enlace was honored with the Fighting for Justice Award!

Yes! I want to support Enlace Comunitario

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$20 Other

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**Send your tax-deductible donation to:
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& Thanks to the many businesses and individuals who contribute!!

What it means to be a father Que significa ser un Padre

"El Papa perfecto se cuida la familia" - JA (edad 10)

"Para mi el padre perfecto es una persona que te comprende y sabe darte consejos en cualquier ocasión sea buena o mala". - ET (edad 13)

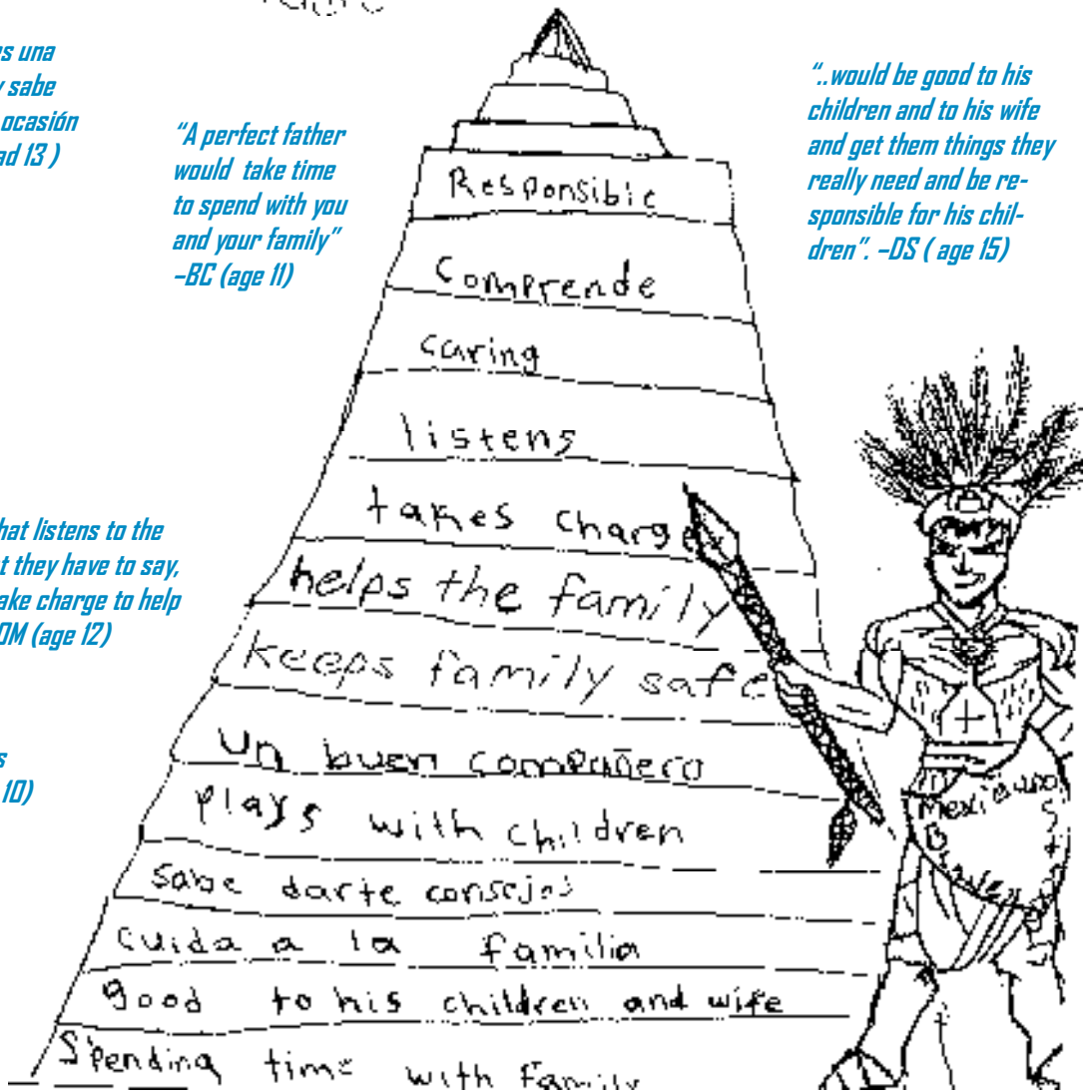
"A perfect father would be someone who will take care of me and play and do stuff with me". - LC (age 14)

"Is a father that listens to the family, to what they have to say, and that will take charge to help the family". -DM (age 12)

"He cares about the mom as much as the kids". -SV (age 10)

"A perfect father would take time to spend with you and your family" -BC (age 11)

"..would be good to his children and to his wife and get them things they really need and be responsible for his children". -DS (age 15)



Enlace Comunitario's Young Men's Group is a violence prevention program which meets weekly and is comprised of 12 male youth between the ages of 10-17 years. The group was asked to collaboratively create a project in honor of Father's Day. The participants, who are all of Mexican origin, chose the Aztec warrior as a symbol of strength and masculinity. On the warrior's shield read the words "Mexican", "Brave" and "Strong". On the steps leading to the top of the Aztec pyramid, each group member wrote an attribute of what they see the "perfect" father to be. These are characteristics of fathers which many of them have not often experienced but which they wish for and say they strive to be when they become grown men and fathers to their own children.

El grupo de hombres jóvenes de Enlace Comunitario es un programa de prevención de violencia, que se junta cada semana y tiene 12 adolescentes varones, entre la edad de 10 y 17 años. Los miembros del grupo colaboraron para hacer un proyecto para honrar el Día del Padre. Los participantes, quienes son de origen Mexicano, escogieron un guerrillero Azteca como símbolo de fuerza y masculinidad. En el escudo del guerrillero, están las palabras "Mexicano", "Valiente" y "Fuerte". En los escalones hacia la pirámida, cada miembro escribió una característica de que consideran ser padre "perfecto". Estés son características, que muchos no han vivido, sin embargo, son características de lo que quieren y como quieren ser cuando sean hombres y padres de familia.