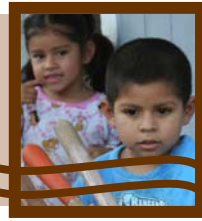


Healthy Together:

Creating Community with New U.S. Americans



Focus Group Summary with Latino new U.S. Americans

On May 12th, 2009, a focus group of nine women and one man was conducted at the Family Multicultural Resource Center (MIRA) in Richfield. The Coordinator of MIRA recruited and organized the focus group, which consisted of four participants from Bloomington and six from Richfield. All participants were from Mexico, except for two, who were from El Salvador. The purpose of conducting this focus group was to learn more about Latino's experience living in their communities, and to hear suggestions about how to improve community connectedness and health. Funding was provided by a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation of Minnesota.

Funding support for this focus group and others was provided by a "Healthy Together: Creating Community with new U.S. Americans" planning grant awarded to Bloomington Public Health. The overall goal of the grant is to improve health and reduce health inequities for new U.S. Americans by building social connectedness and relationships between newcomers and broader communities. In this report, "new U.S. Americans" and "newcomer" are used interchangeably.

Name one or two good things about your community?

The top three things:

- They felt that security was good in their communities, overall they felt safe
- Appreciated the programs and groups that provided help for Latinos who are learning and adjusting to live here, particularly English and computer classes
- Cleanliness of the community was also cited.

Identify 1-2 community events or programs you/your family participated in last year?

- Most people participated in the English classes and computer classes at MIRA.
- Many others participate in their children's schools events.
- The Health Fair and the Richfield Cinco de Mayo celebration were also mentioned.

How do you find out about what programs or services are available in your community?

- Pamphlets given out in children's schools
- Pamphlets or signs on poster boards at clinics
- CENTRO-Minneapolis Latino assistance organization

How can the community help newcomers feel welcome and a part of the community?

- Tell them how to get the information they need
- Have Spanish speaking person at clinics, hospital, and libraries to answer questions and give them the information they need

In what ways do you contribute to your community?

Several in the group mentioned different places they volunteer such as:

- Head Start volunteer in a reading class-helped make a video
- Church events
- Help sew/knit items to help kids with cancer

How easy is it to know long-term residents in your community? What are your ideas on how to increase opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to get to know each other and learn from each other?

- Many talked about their neighbors, citing both positive and negative experiences.
- Some said it was nice during the summer to see their neighbors outside.

What do you do to keep yourself healthy?

- They cook health foods-vegetables, fruits, natural juices
- Know that they should be eating vegetables and be active but don't always do it
- Do more activities in the summer time, their kids can play outside with friends
- Don't drink soda, try not to eat "basura"/garbage foods very minimally
- One participant is in a health/nutrition class

Why is it difficult to keep healthy?

- Lots of publicity targeted at children that promote "bad" foods
- Difficult to work and keep healthy
- Their kids love "comida rapida" –fast food
- Some said they have to cook for people in the house with diabetes and high cholesterol so they have to cook healthy
- Many are very interested to having a place to exercise, day care would be needed

Drawing Activity: Draw a picture of your ideal community. Two groups were formed

Group 1: Library, school, church, good education-school (and to get dad's more involved), uniforms in school so people don't discriminate against economic differences, police station, hospital with people who speak Spanish and can help Latinos

Group 2: Health services for all and a hospital all in the same area, Central multicultural place that gives help/resources to people from all cultures; including information about immigration, licenses, police, and fire protection, gym with a cheaper price for people who can't afford much, bookstore, market with cheap prices, and a place that sells Mexican products, Head Start, schools buildings with all grades co-located, church with programs for people that need food or other help, good security in parks

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