

Esperanza

www.esperanza.us

NEWS FROM OUR MINISTRY

FALL 2008



Youth proudly wear their J.A.M. (Join the Abstinence Movement) t-shirts and show their pledge cards at the Tesoros Rally in CA.

Abstinence Message Rang Loud and True at Tesoros First Rally

Tesoros de Esperanza (Treasures of Hope) has reached over 900 youth. More than 300 teens have participated in the abstinence education program successfully celebrated its first Abstinence Rally on September 6 at Templo Calvario CDC in Orange County, CA. The celebratory event gathered 386 youth who received resources, information, and support that reinforces and affirms their choice to abstain from sexual activity until marriage. In the past eight months, the program

has reached over 900 youth. More than 300 teens have participated in the abstinence classes during school hours or at after-school programs; and at least 600 teens have participated in the *Introduction to Abstinence* assemblies. “Through *Tesoros*, young people are learning healthy behaviors and positive relationship-building skills, which will prepare them to choose and sustain healthy mar-

riages in the future,” said Ms. Tamara Díaz, project director.

The program is currently working to develop youth mentors that will commit to the abstinence lifestyle and serve as support among teen peers. To date, the project has also engaged over 200 parents through the *Parent Education Seminar*. “This is an excellent and promising start...our work continues to spread the word about abstinence among teens.”

Esperanza wants to thank our partners on this project, Templo Calvario CDC, La Familia Hispana, the project evaluator, Dr. Joseph Donnelly, and the Esperanza staff for their hard work in a successful first year. Keep up the good work!

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Esperanza

STRENGTHENING OUR HISPANIC COMMUNITY

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President's Brief



Saludos,
It is no secret that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is affecting our Hispanic community in disproportionate numbers. We represent approximately 15% of the U.S. population, but account for 19% of the AIDS cases reported in the nation.*

As people of faith, it is our Christian duty to care for the sick in our community. It is written: "...though my condition tempted you to reject me, you did not turn me away. No, you took me in and cared for me as though I were an angel from God..." (Galatians 4:14). While there is still no cure for AIDS, we can educate ourselves and others to prevent the spread of HIV.

I encourage you to join us in the *You are the Answer* HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign on October 12-19. To support you in this, we have created faith-sensitive resources, including an inspirational music CD, books, the short film *No te rindas* ("Don't Give Up"), sermon outlines and congregational prayers. All these resources are available in our website at www.esperanza.us. By taking one week a year, every year, to educate and minister about HIV/AIDS you will help breakdown the myths and taboos associated with this illness. **You can make a difference!** Join us and prevent the spread of HIV.

Bendiciones,

The Rev. Luis Cortés, Jr.
President

*The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation –Latinos and HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet May 2008



The youth leadership from CBCC worked towards finding productive and peaceful alternatives to violence.

CUEY: Empowering Kids with Positive Alternatives to Violence

Esperanza's CUEY (Communities United to Empower Youth) program is a three-year program to help increase the organizational stability and capacity of nine organizations in Philadelphia, PA. Through trainings and individualized technical assistance, the organizations increase their capacity to deliver services to high-risk Latino youth.

Cardinal Bevilacqua Community Center (CBCC), one of CUEY's participating organizations, is a prime example of how capacity building strengthens our youth and our community. The training and technical assistance provided by CUEY, has enhanced the center's ability to better serve *el barrio's* youth.

One of CBCC's goals was to provide neighborhood youth with a forum to address violence in West-Kensington, a neighborhood known as one of the most

violent in the city of Philadelphia. To do this, the CBCC provided an intensive weeklong youth leadership-development camp. After the camp, young people were better equipped to communicate a message of hope and peace.

Youth leaders ended their time together by designing and creating a community garden, which serves as a memorial for neighborhood youth that recently lost their lives to violence. The youth hope to see the plants grow and flourish but more importantly, they hope to spread the message of peace to others.

CUEY helps organizations, like CBCC, build organizational capacity to prevent youth violence, gangs, and child abuse and neglect. For more information about this program, visit the Capacity Building section of our web at www.esperanza.us.

Marriages of Hope Strengthens Marriages Across the Nation

“Building Healthy Relationships” was the theme of the most recent conferences offered by Esperanza’s Marriages of Hope (MOH) project. Two hundred couples gathered at the Crystal Cathedral in Orange County, CA on July 26th, while 50 couples from New York met on August 2nd at the Marriott Hotel in Teaneck, New Jersey to receive marriage education. During the two conferences, couples learned about effective communication, conflict resolution skills, domestic violence, and forgiveness and reconciliation.

For almost two years, MOH has trained Mentor Couples in California and New York. During both conferences, the Mentor Couples who trained during the first year of the project (2006-07) served as the seminar’s facilitators, putting into practice their first year experiences to teach healthy marriage



skills. Currently, over 50 churches and community organizations are involved in the project, actively strengthening couples and building stronger families in their communities.

Esperanza Participates in PAMRC Marriage Conference

Esperanza was part of the planning committee of the Philadelphia Area Marriage Resource Center (PAMRC) “Healthy Marriages, Safe Families, Strong Communities” conference on July 23-24, 2008. The conference attracted representatives from numerous churches, nonprofits, and the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “This has been an efficient way to get together with people that are interested in doing similar work and share how they do it,” said Mary Ann Higgins, Regional Administrator for ACF. “A lot of what was said is practical; sharing ideas is the way to make things happen in the communities.”

For additional information about the MOH program, contact Rev. Benjamín Sosa at (215) 324-0746, Ext. 219 or at bsosa@esperanza.us.



During both conferences, couples learned about effective communication, conflict resolution skills, domestic violence, and forgiveness and reconciliation.

A New Book by Rev. Luis Cortés, Jr.

Rev. Luis Cortés, Jr., President of Esperanza has been a strong advocate for comprehensive immigration reform for many years. Now, he has written a book that will help immigrants through the process of obtaining their citizenship.

A Simple Guide to U.S. Immigration and Citizenship offers accurate information on:

- how to get a visa for a family member
- places to go for help
- answers to frequently asked questions about the immigration process



More Immigration Resources...

The Survivor's Guide for Immigrants and *The Survivor's Guide for Immigrants –Pastor's Edition*. Two new indispensable immigration resources that include valuable information on how churches and individuals can help the immigrant community in tangible ways. The resources provide practical advice on a variety of topics like the plans that should be in place in case of a raid, arrest, detention or deportation.

The new book by Rev. Cortés and *The Guides* are available in English and Spanish at our e-store: www.esperanza.us.

Give the Gift of Hope!

Esperanza is transforming lives every day in Philadelphia and throughout the United States. But we cannot do this work without your financial contributions and faith in our work. Your support helps us develop and sustain innovative programs that truly bring hope and strength to our Hispanic community. Give the gift of hope! **To make an online gift, please go to www.esperanza.us and click on the "Donate Now" page**, or if you prefer, mail your donation with the coupon below to: Esperanza, Development Department, 4261 North 5th St., Philadelphia, PA 19140



Yes, I would like to make a personal gift to help Esperanza strengthen the Hispanic community!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____

Email Address: _____

Enclosed is my gift to Esperanza in the amount of (select one):

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other _____

Payment Method:

I have included a check made payable to Esperanza.

I'd like to make a secure donation online. Go to www.esperanza.us and click **Donate Now!**

I'd like to pay by credit card. Card Type:

Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

Cardholder: _____

Account #: _____

Expiration Date: ___/___/___ Security Code: _____

Signature: _____

Thank you for being a part of this work!

Esperanza is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Creating Awareness about HIV/AIDS

Tú eres la respuesta HIV/AIDS Awareness Week is October 12-19, 2008



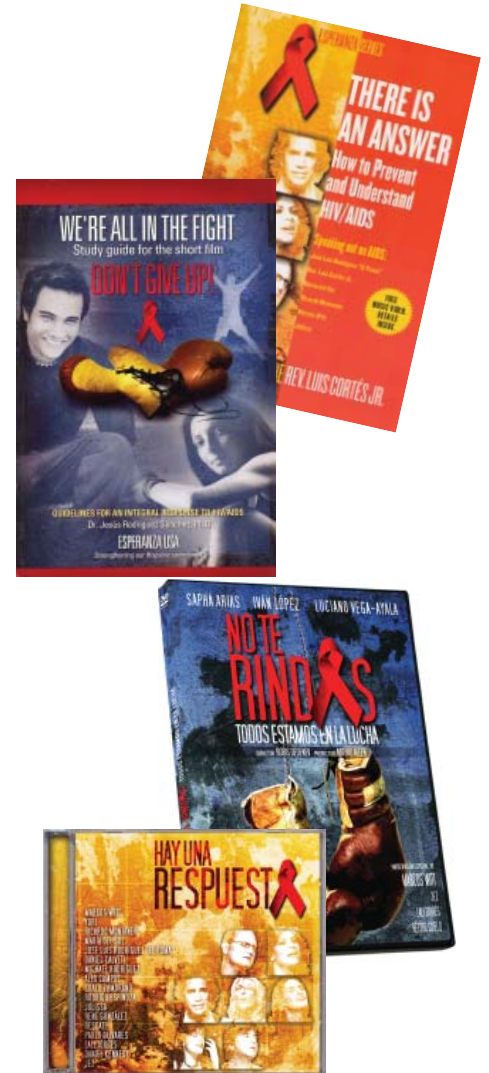
Esperanza has designated October 12-19 as *Tú eres la respuesta* HIV/AIDS Awareness Week. The week coincides with the Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15) and with the National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (Oct. 15).

HIV/AIDS is still one of the leading causes of death for Latinos in the U.S. Through the *Tú eres la respuesta* (You are the Answer) national campaign, Esperanza calls Hispanic pastors to dedicate one week a year, every year to educate their congregations on HIV/AIDS. Esperanza has developed educational resources that increase awareness of the devastating effects that HIV/AIDS has on the Hispanic community and that suggest culturally appropriate courses of action. Resources include an inspirational music CD, books, and the short film *No te rindas* (“Don’t Give Up”), which contains public service announcements by leading artists Marcos Witt, José Luis Rodríguez “El Puma”, and Yuri.

Esperanza has also developed other faith-sensitive resources that include sermon

outlines and congregational prayers to guide pastors in preaching about this important yet sensitive subject. All resources are available at www.esperanza.us.

The fight against HIV/AIDS is far from over. Please join us in this effort to break-down the myths and taboos associated with HIV/AIDS.



The Facts About HIV/AIDS and Hispanics in the US*

- In 2006, Hispanics made up about 13% of the U.S. population but accounted for 16% of the estimated 982,498 AIDS cases diagnosed since the beginning of the epidemic.
- In 2005, HIV/AIDS was the 4th leading cause of death among Hispanic men and women 35 to 44.
- In 2006, Hispanics had the second highest rate of AIDS diagnoses for adults and adolescents across all racial and ethnic groups.
- An estimated 80,690 Hispanics with AIDS in the United States died by the end of 2006.

*CDC HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet – April '08

Receive a Special Gift from Mujeres de Esperanza!



The Mujeres de Esperanza ministry is calling all *mujeres* to contribute prayers, testimonies, and stories of hope for the monthly e-newsletter. “Sharing testimonies, prayers, and stories is one of the ways to connect with other women across the nation,” said Rev. Miriam Witt, MDE Board President. E-mail your submissions, in English or Spanish, to mujeres@esperanza.us and when published, we will send you a special gift.

This Esperanza national ministry unites women from across the country through

various events and prayer gatherings. The most recent event was the Mujeres de Esperanza Prayer Challenge at the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast and Conference in Washington, D.C. last June. “We may not always have the opportunity to meet face-to-face, but our ministry grows stronger and keeps together through our collective prayers and we can share those prayers and testimonies every month in our e-newsletter.”

The current Mujeres de Esperanza challenge is to spread the word about the

ministry and reach more women with the Word, so if you do not currently receive our monthly e-newsletter, make sure to visit www.esperanza.us/mujeres and join us! The person who submits the most names will receive a special gift. When you share Mujeres de Esperanza with your friends and family, you are sharing hope.

Activating the
Faith of Women
through Intercession
and Service



The Holy Land Awaits You with Esperanza Mission Tours

Take your own group or congregation to Israel on a pilgrimage mission of a lifetime.

Esperanza Mission Tours is recruiting Tour Leaders to take groups to Israel to minister in the Holy Land and help Christians in Palestine. We work in collaboration with professionals in the US and Israel that will assist you in promoting your tours and help you every step of the way.

To learn more or to become a Tour Leader, please visit
www.esperanzamissiontours.org.

