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NRFC Webinar Series

Working with Latino Dads

Transcript

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Moderator:

- Jen McHenry, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)

Presenters:

- Alicia La Hoz, Family Bridges, Chicago, IL.
- Jose Muñoz, Compadre y Compadre, The Children's Shelter, San Antonio, TX.
- Jerry Tello, National Compadres Network, Los Angeles, CA.

Operator: Please stand by. We're about to begin. Good day and welcome, everyone, to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse "Working with Latino Dads" webinar. Today's call is being recorded. At this time, I'd like to turn the call over to Jen McHenry. Please go ahead, ma'am.

Jen McHenry: Thank you so much and welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us for today's webinar on Working with Latino Dads. My name is Jen McHenry as mentioned. I'll be moderating today's webinar. I get the honor of introducing our presenters and facilitating our question and answer session. I'm really excited to be part of the webinar today. I think we've got some really great information to share and some excellent experience from our presenters.

[By] way of introduction, for those of you who have been on our webinars in the past, our program staff, Patrick Patterson and Nigel Vann, often get the chance to facilitate our discussions. You probably have not heard my voice before, but I've been a member of the NRFC team since 2006 and working with our webinars, our programs, [and] our website.

I'm really looking forward to today's webinar because it's focusing on strategies that have proven successful in working with Latino dads and families, and it's a really great opportunity to learn from the experience of our three very accomplished presenters today. It's also something that is a topic that we've been hearing -- practitioners in the field wanting to know more about tips and strategies in working with culturally-specific populations.

Part of the reason I mention that is because, if you can hold out to the end of today's webinar, not only will you hear these great presentations, questions and answers, but you'll also have the opportunity to give us some feedback on other topics you may want to hear in the future. So if there is an area that you think we should cover again, or we haven't covered at the Clearinghouse, this could be a great opportunity for you to give us that feedback so we can

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keep providing these technical assistance webinars on topics that are something very meaningful for your work and for the families that you're working with.

So the first thing I'm going to do is let everybody know how to ask a question. During today's webinar, your lines will be on mute. You're listening to us through your computers and hopefully can all hear me. We have a chat option to the left of the presentation screen. This is an area where we'd like you to feel free to give general feedback -- things like "great job" or a "that happens for us as well." That's something that's going to be seen by everyone.

If you have a specific question that you'd like one of our presenters to address, or all of our presenters to address, we'd like you to ask it in the Ask a Question box. It will be at the bottom right-hand of your screen. Type your question in there, hit Enter, and that will come to us here at the back end, and we'll collect those questions and address as many as we can. If we don't get to your question, we will address those after the conclusion of the webinar. We'll put together a document that sort of synthesizes some of the frequently asked questions and release that within a couple of weeks. So if you do have a question, ask multiple questions, you can ask them at any point during the presentation.

We also have the opportunity for you to connect to some of the resources that we're going to discuss today. The first, in the bottom left of your screen, you'll see a Web Link box. This will take you to the fatherhood.gov NRFC website. It'll also take you to a Toolkit on working with Latino families that the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families has produced in part with one of our presenters today, Alicia La Hoz. It'll also take you to the videos that accompany that Toolkit on some very specific and important issues.

Just to the right of that, so between Web Links and Ask a Question, there's a spot for Downloadable Resources. Again, we have longer bios for today's presenters and then also some information on working with Latino families.

So a quick little bit for those of you who may be new on the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. Perhaps you heard about this webinar through email or a tweet or Facebook post that wasn't through the NRFC. If so, we are extra delighted to have you here for the first time.

The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse is funded by the Office of Family Assistance, and we're a resource to support programs working with fathers and families; also to provide resources for dad programs, researchers and policy makers. We do this primarily through our website fatherhood.gov. We also have a number of resources, including our Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit and archived versions of these webinars available on the website as well. We also have an email contact and a call center that individuals can ask us questions about where to find resources, both for your programs and also for your dads. In particular, that call center line is staffed by a partner who specializes in being able to handle individual cases with very specific questions. So if you have someone come into your program and they have a question about something that's just out of your realm and not something you've already been partnering with someone on, you can direct them to that line and we can help them more specifically. You can also engage with us on social media. I'd be remiss if I didn't point out our Facebook page, fatherhoodgov, and our Twitter handle, [@fatherhoodgov](https://twitter.com/fatherhoodgov) as well.

So a little bit about our goals for today's webinar. The goal for today's webinar is to share information about ways in working with Latino fathers may differ from work with other dads. We're going to go into more specifics and obviously, for every nuanced point we make here, there is another one certainly to be made, but we're going to do an overview into that respect strategies that have proven successful in connecting with Latino fathers through the program work that each of the organizations represented here have done over many, many years. And then also just general tips for programs and the hands-on sort of information and resources that hopefully give you something immediately after this so that you can take back and use in your community.

So with that, I'm going to do a brief introduction of the three presenters that we will be hearing from today. Again, we're very excited to have each of them take the time out to be with us today.

So first, we'll be hearing from Jerry Tello. He is the Director at the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, and the co-founder of the National Compadres Network. Jerry is an internationally-recognized expert in family strengthening, therapeutic healing, cross-cultural issues, and motivational speaking. During his 30-plus year career, he's incorporated his real-life experience, together with research-based knowledge and indigenous cultural-based teaching to engage people in reality-based healing and growth-inspiring experience. He's the author of various children's books, professional publications, culturally-based curricula, and inspirational CDs and DVDs. Jerry has received numerous awards, including the Doctor of Peace Award and the Presidential Crime Victims Service Award. He also directs the Sacred Circle Center in Whittier, California, and is a member of the Sacred Circles performance group which is dedicated to community peace and healing. He is the proud father of three children, Marcos, Renee, and Emilio, and he is the grandfather of Amara and Natia.

Second, we'll be hearing from Dr. Alicia La Hoz, the Founder and Executive Director of Family Bridges. Alicia is a licensed clinical psychologist who works with the Latino community in the Chicagoland area. Family Bridges provides marriage and relationship education for approximately 10,000 people a year. She was a member of the Hispanic Research Work Group, which was organized by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluations, which is under the Administration of Children and Families, and she recently worked with ICF International to complete a toolkit for stakeholders working with Latino couples and individuals. Again, that is the resource I referenced a little bit earlier, available immediately through the Web Links and Downloadable Resources that you see on your screen.

Dr. La Hoz practices at Meyer Clinic, treating persons with a myriad of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, OCD, and specializes in family and marriage relationship distress.

Jose Muñoz will be closing us out, and he is the Director of Fatherhood Services Compadre y Compadre, the children's shelter in San Antonio, Texas. Jose has been in the health and human services field for almost 20 years. His experience includes working with children and foster parents, with agencies across south Texas. As the Director of Fatherhood Services for the children's shelter in San Antonio, he leads a group of six parent educators as they teach over 400 clients a year to connect their heads and their hearts to become nurturing fathers. A native of San Antonio, Jose has been in the Air Force Reserve for 20 years after serving four years in the Army. He is the proud dad of a 14-year-old daughter, who is the world to him. So that is who we'll be hearing from today. And moving on from hearing my voice to some very accomplished leaders in the field.

But before we do, we are going to ask a question about what you do. You should be seeing on your screen momentarily, or actually, immediately a question about your population: "Approximately, what percentage of the fathers in your program are from Latino backgrounds?" So you can answer by clicking the radio button on the left. So zero to 10 percent, 11 to 49 percent, 50 to 75, 75 to 100, or a no vote if maybe you're just not sure at all. I'll give one more second and let some people weigh in. It looks like 11 to 49 percent is taking the day, but a fairly high percentage of you working with almost exclusively Latino families, so this is going to be great. Hopefully for those of you throughout the scale, you'll learn something new today and maybe have something later on that you can write in and share.

So with that, I will be turning things over to Jerry. Jerry, please go ahead.

Jerry Tello: Good morning, *buenos días* to everyone and *buenas tardes* to all those on the East Coast. I want to thank all of you for joining us, thank you for blessing us with your presence today. My dad would say that anytime somebody shows up, they are a blessing. As a kid, I didn't think so because sometimes relatives would just show up, but that was part of the way we learned in our family. And I want to acknowledge my family. My father comes from Aguascalientes, one of 15, and my mom comes from Chihuahua. At 14 came through Texas, so there's also a very

strong Texan flavor. My dad believed there was Texas and the rest of the United States, and then we moved to Los Angeles because the work moved there. And I grew up in Compton and Watts in a large Mexican, African-American neighborhood, living on this side of the tracks, if you will. The other side was a whole different world.

But I'm real privileged and real blessed to do this work, and have been doing it -- I know my bio says 30 years -- more like 40 years now. But we've been learning, even as a child, learning this sense of how to be a good person by the values of my parents and my family, but also the struggles as well. And then watching -- you watch the men and watch the women in your families and begin to understand some things and don't understand things, because some things were not explained. What I thought, they weren't explained because they didn't want to share with us, but I began to understand later on is that sometimes families don't share things. My Mom didn't share things and sometimes your dad doesn't share things because they're struggling themselves. They don't understand, either. They're barely surviving.

So this work and this last 40 years has really been a privilege to explore not only in terms of this *hombre noble*, what does a noble man, honorable man mean, and what we've been taught by the men and by fathers all over. And then all over it's a man who shows up and speaks up and starts up with love, respect, trust and dignity. And to heal past wounds, because we recognize that all of us carry whatever has come through generations and share, but also to share generational blessings with our children. And those children look up to them -- not just your children.

So that's the basis of what we do. In 1988, a group of Chicano, Latino and Native men -- For some people, the term "Latino" is -- we need to understand it and that there's a lot of different ethnicity, background and cultural entities that come within that. I know the percentage of Latinos that you work with, but let me just say right now that there's 12 states today, and there's many regions and jurisdictions that still don't count us. As a people, we're still counted in the Anglo, if you will, realm. So the demographics sometimes don't play out, and many of us come from mixed backgrounds. You know, we have the people from Mexico, but from Central America, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico, all over. And many of us are also mixed. We come in our heritage with some African sometimes base, and even some Asian base and European base.

But we came together in 1988, a group of us men that had been working already, but we were very distressed because we saw things going on in our community. We saw poverty and injustice and racism and a lot of hurtful things, but we also saw a lot of hurtful things in families. Because when we don't know how to process those things in community, we take them in our families and sometimes take them inside of us, too. And we were very distressed, even though many of us were professionals, we still saw a lot of struggle and not a lot of specific programs that really addressed the issues that were going on in our families.

So a number of us men came together, really with the intent of trying to develop programs. We figured out early on in our *círculo* [circle], in us gathering like that, and we gathered really with the spirit of our grandmothers and our grandfathers. We started for prayer and asked for help and asked for guidance. And what we realized early on, even those of us that were sitting in that room that were professionals and supposedly had made it, that we had a lot of issues.

And so what we recognized at that time is the best thing that we could do, as men, was to go on a journey to heal ourselves and to reclaim the true sense of who we are as *hombres*, as men. Not the false sense, not the wounded sense that sometimes we act on or we think is part of our culture, because there is a false sense of machismo, of men being very misogynistic and us being controlling and us being womanizers and all of that, and certainly there are men in our culture that do that, but that's the wounded side. That's not the sacred side. That's not the blessed side. And so what we decided is to reclaim that, and to reclaim that and redefine that and to begin walking like that, but also to make a commitment to share these teachings and bring these *círculo*, these gathering ways and these traditions back to communities all across the country, and we've done that.

So the National Compadres Network, we're a national organization. We do a lot of capacity building, training, technical assistance, all of those things. But we sit with men. We sit in communities. We develop programs, not only around fathers, around teen fathers. We work with men that are coming out of institutions, incarcerated fathers who want to come back. We work with immigrant fathers. We work with teen fathers, work with military fathers, we work with a whole lot of different fathers on a whole lot of issues based on this concept of *hombre noble*, and the extended kinship network.

Because that sense of *compadre*, of *compadrezco*, of *compradrazco*, that sense of extended kinship. And what we realized in terms of health and well-being is health and well-being in our cultural sense is inter-connectedness. And when it's wounded, then it begins to dissipate and you don't have connections. You don't have relations. You don't have support. And even in families, even a family that lives together sometimes, because of alcohol and substance abuse and family violence and other oppressive behaviors that have been internalized from the outside and the generational pain, it sometimes gets integrated.

So these are our goals. I'm not going to go over those. You can go and see these on the website. But the first one is to acknowledge the many Chicano Latino men who are positive, responsible fathers and family members and community members and leaders. And often that's not acknowledged. We don't see that in the news; we don't see that any place. We have a very strong commitment and you see it especially in immigrant fathers that have not been acculturated or assimilated. You see a lot of them walking kids to school, pushing strollers and doing other things as well.

But we also challenge and encourage all Latino men to actually participate in nurturing, guiding and assisting, but this third one is real important, to stand collectively against community and family violence, because that's part of manhood, too. And you can do all the fatherhood stuff. You can have communication, read to your kids, do literacy, do all the activities, but if you don't really have good relationships with the moms and the grandmas and the sisters and even other men, then you really, then that gets broken down a lot.

But there'[re] [*sic*] a lot of issues that Latino males face, and we work with a lot of families that deal with immigration. And whether the father is documented or not, they still have family members that have those issues. And we work with a lot of fathers that even though they work, they send part of the money back to Mexico or Central America, and that doesn't get counted into child support issues.

I work with a lot of Central American fathers and other fathers, even war-torn migrations and still are struggling with that, with men from Central America. Military deployments and working with the military and helping them as well, and fathers who have PTSD and have CTSD, chronic trauma as well, and how do you address that. We have programs for that.

Men that are incarcerated, we work in the institutions as well. In the *barrio*, in the ghetto, that's sometimes like a prison because some of the same issues come up. And then issues of discrimination that even good fathers, even healthy fathers, even documented, all those fathers, they still struggle with that, and you have to deal with that. If you don't deal with that, then fathers will trigger, and sometimes it'll trigger issues in security, and violence will come out, not only in the community, but in their homes. And sometimes fathers then will self-medicate as well.

And the unresolved generational trauma is real important to understand, because now research is showing that trauma that was experienced by your great-great-great-grandmother or great-great-grandfather -- We understand history. We understand that Latinos have gone through oppression and colonization and all of that, and those wounded sense sometimes don't get resolved and it can then affect you emotionally, spiritually, and even physiologically as well.

And then the lack of available resources, obviously. Because even though programs can be translated and you can adapt them, that's not really reaching the core issues and being able to understand the population. So we work a lot on those issues. And we understand that many of the men that we deal with, some of them are confused with what they need to do as fathers within the realm of everything that's going on. Because they're told that they need to guide their children and do all of this, but in the workplace or in the community, they're not treated that way.

And I remember as a young child, and I was told in school I had rights, and I could have the ability to speak my feelings and share my feelings, and I went home and my dad says: "Hey, throw the trash out." I said: "Wait dad, I got rights. And I want to express my feeling." And my dad lifted his hand and said: "I'll show you a right, right here." And to my father, that was disrespectful that I challenged him. And many times, that's what happens with Latino families and fathers and between couples as well.

We work a lot with couples because the mothers are more in the schools and interacting and learning and going to classes and beginning to understand how the system, how western society values are. And sometimes if you're not working with the fathers as well, sometimes it becomes a disconnect between the couple, and even a disconnect between the father and the children as well. And often that can infuse anger because fathers get angry -- "Wait, I'm working hard, my dad used to work two jobs! I'm working real hard, and these kids are coming, challenging me." And what happens if there's not a connect on that, then sometimes hate sets in, and we have kids that hate their dads because they don't understand them or they're ashamed of them, so then they'd be ashamed of them, right?

And what we find is that can then bring self-hate. And self-hate is that shame of yourself. You don't want to be who you are. You don't want to be from your culture. You assimilate. You don't want to speak Spanish no more. You don't even want to claim who you are. And you think because you got an education, you're smarter than your grandmother and feel that you have more rights and all of these things.

And we see the self-hate, because the self-hate really is that gang violence. We see the self-hate in the alcoholism. Self-hate is the domestic violence, the sexual abuse, all of that in communities. And sometimes it goes to rage, and rage is what we see as this reactive behavior that just moves through some of our families.

So we recognize also at the same time that as much as the generational wounds come through, we also recognize that we have generational blessings and teachings. And what a lot of people don't know is that our culture, way, way back in our writings, we had volumes of writings around just how to raise children. How to be a good father. How to be a good mother. Nobody taps those writings. And those were when the *conquistadores* came over to Mexico, those are the things that they tried to destroy, but we had oral history.

And it's all based on these teachings of the ancestors, something we call *la educación*, or the development of your character, your spirit, your whole sense. And there's two sides the *cara, corazón (Itxli, Yollotl)*, the face and heart, and out of that face comes two values, dignity and respect. Out of the heart comes two values, the sense of trust and the sense of love.

And so we base all the teachings on this, because you can't just teach fathers, because we work with a lot of mothers that are single mothers that are raising boys and raising children as well. And so we work with the entire family, and sometimes grandmothers and sometimes grandfathers. And sometimes the grandparents are raising the children because the parents are not around or have been deported. And that's a whole other issue in which fathers get deported and what happens in that trauma as well.

So we base it on this, and we see these values that become the core essence of all of our curriculum, and it's something when you begin to work with families in a good way and have them remember their true traditions, not the wounded ones, that we begin to then water these and build on these and in our traditional culture, we didn't separate so much fatherhood and motherhood, although the roles sometimes are different because of the needs of

the community. But in a true, harmonious family, in a true family that believes in what we call [speaking Aztec], which means the interconnected sacredness of your family, then you do whatever is necessary. Whatever is necessary, so as a man you bathe your children, you change their diaper, you play with them. You do whatever is necessary. And when you see a family and you see a father and a mother that really have that sense of “groundedness” in these values, there’s a lot of flexibility. When you see the rigidity in families, even in Latino families, that’s not part of the culture. That’s the “woundedness” that has not been healed.

So we have these seven principles that comes from our ancient teachings. These are things that people don’t recognize. First is a man of his word. Of course, he has a sense of responsibility, his well-being and those brothers in circle, rejects any form of abuse, and this is real important. Physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

And we deal with spirituality, not necessarily religious, but the spirituality is very significant and to be able to know how to incorporate that and how to honor that, it takes time to reflect and includes ceremonies. What I mean by that is people need to take time, whether it’s going to church, whether it’s meditating, whether you’re spending quiet time with your children, something that really brings the essence of connecting yourself. It’s sensitive and understanding, it means it comes outside of yourself to understand the other person and work with them. And it’s like a mirror reflecting support and clarity to one another. So the teaching doesn’t have to be harsh. It can just be a mirror. It can be an example. And then lives these values with honesty and with love.

And that last one is real important because as a child, I remember going to church and seeing families going to church and pray and getting along. And then after, they treated their children real different after church than they did while they were on those grounds.

So these are those values. And it brings these resiliency factors that are very, very significant, that become the basis of all the curriculum that we use and all the programs. And we do a lot of capacity building, training, technical assistance of staff or organizations. We work with probation. We work with educational institutions. We work with the juvenile justice system. We work with the military. Because it is those institutions, even in police and probation, that really often place a burden on our fathers and on our families. And so we must change the narrative and impact systems as well, to be able to look at families in a different way and to be able to integrate. Not only assimilate them -- change them so they can get along with society. But there’s a lot of very positive values and positive teachings that we have in our culture that really, society needs to understand. And we don’t want to eliminate those.

These fatherhood support trainings and curriculums that we have, Fathers with Faith and Heart, we have a very extensive curriculum that we used for years. And all of our curriculums, so the second one is Fathers in Family Literacy, *Hombres Que Cuentan* (Families That Count), but also Families That Read, so we use reading and storytelling and literacy with young kids, young children. And the issue is that some fathers can’t read. They don’t read, and so we use storytelling and we use descriptive music and songs and things like that.

Raising Children with Pride is for teen fathers. *Amor de Padre* [A Father’s Love] is a sense of recovering after a father has disconnected from, whether he’s been incarcerated or deported or whatever. A Mama’s Love is working with mothers that way. *Joven Noble* is A Young Man’s Rites of Passage, because we recognize you don’t learn how to become a father just when you all of a sudden realize you’re going to have a child. [It’s a] developmental process. And in order to be a good father, first you must be a good man. And so we work with young men all across the country doing rights [*sic*] of passage.

Training, we train people in this curriculum. By the way, there are female-based trainings in all of this that are staffed -- the female guides and teachers and experts do as a parallel sense -- but I’m talking about fathers today, so that’s our focus on this.

El Hombre Noble Buscando Balance. These are the men that have had violence as an issue in their lives, meaning they've been reported by courts because of some type of domestic violence or anger issue. And so we have a whole evidence-based curriculum based on that.

And then Fire and Water is dual-diagnosis issues, where men and youth have issues with substances and violence as well. And then Men and Women of Honor are those that are working with men and women that have come from the military.

And these are some of our programs. You can go on our website and see some of the other things we do, but all of our curriculums are based on the cultural history, cultural values of the Chicano, Latino, [and] Native population. Because we find throughout the nation that there are evidence-based curriculums. And we have those as well. But when you take an evidence-based curriculum that is normed on a certain population, and then you translate it and adapt it to another population, it's no longer evidence-based. And so there are curriculums you can use, but then they become reliable on whether the facilitator, because you can take a great facilitator and they can take any curriculum and make it applicable. Or you could have a very strong, grounded, culturally-based organization that can take probably almost any curriculum and make it work and adapt it and all that. But it's not the curriculum that is really evidence-based anymore. It's the efficacy of the program or the facilitator.

And so our reliability is using three levels. First, that the curriculum is syntonic with the population. The values, the issues, the struggles, all of that that we work in terms of capacity-building with facilitators to help them to integrate and understand, and be able to flow with and guide the fathers and families and understand all the sociocultural issues and historical issues as well, but then working with organizations to help get them to shift as well. Because you can have wonderful programs for Latino fathers, but if the organization and the philosophy of how you give them out are not in tune with that, then there's a conflict many, many times. We have many tools as well, a toolkit, and you can go on our website and see we have posters talking about *El Hombre Noble*, the true macho. And this is our website.

And I tried to share with you in 15 minutes what my mother has been trying to teach me all my life. And that's just how to be a good person, how to be a good man, and how to make your family and your culture proud. So I'll stop there.

Jen McHenry: Great. Thank you so much, Jerry. That was excellent and really insightful about inspiring for the work that you've been working on in addressing through the whole person and the whole family and the whole culture. It's a really excellent approach. So hopefully we're going to get to question and answers. I'll be able to address some of the questions that have come in which are really thoughtful as well.

Again, as a reminder, if you do have any questions, you can send them using the Ask a Question feature. And also, just for everyone who is interested, I am delighted that so many people are interested in the slides. Both the slides and the recording will be made available on our website. The slides and the transcript information will likely go up first. And those will be PDFs that will be made available.

The recording will take a little bit longer. As a federal resource, we make sure that all of our files that are available on our website are 508-compliant. And that means that they are readable and accessible for people with different disability issues. So it does take a little bit of time to make sure all of that is done and done properly. But they will be up. Also, if you are not on our email update list, you can sign up on the website as well. We will use that to let people know when material is up, and also when we have new events.

All right, so now I'll turn it over to Alicia La Hoz, who will tell us a little bit about her program and her experience. Alicia?

Dr. Alicia La Hoz: Thank you, and thank you everyone. And just kudos to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse for tackling this topic. We all know that the Latino population is growing at rapid speed, and it's an understudied group in our nation.

And we know from the recent Child Trans-Hispanic Institute, for example, that our children, they're facing the consequences of poverty at rates that are very sombering [*sic*]. And so we want to bring hope to our children, and would feel that strengthening family relationships, fatherhood programs through marriage, that it's a way to nurture them. And ultimately, that will lead them to access opportunities for growth, right? That will lead them to finishing high school and moving on to higher education and obtaining career pathways that are going to get them out of poverty.

And it's really exciting for me to see this day and day again with our work at Family Bridges. Not long ago, I got a text from Pedro, one of our participants who completed our programming. And he finished our micro enterprise class soon after completing our marriage relationship class, and he talked about his gratitude. He recently was able to get a license in construction. And so he wanted to thank us, because the program coached him to be able to do that. Him [*sic*] and his brother for a while had been trying to obtain a construction license, but they just didn't know how to do that. And so the program allowed him to do that. You can imagine someone like him, Pedro, what it meant for his kids to see him study, to see him model that, complete his license. And then how as he's launched since then his business, different opportunities that has opened up for his children as well.

And so Pedro's story, like many of the ones that we are serving, really encourage us to continue our work. We provide family strengthening programs in the community, going to where people are at, providing programs that are faith-based as well as secular-based in the schools and in the communities and the high schools, as well as in the workplace. We really feel that people have a sense of a longing to be in relationships and to be happy. And of course, all sorts of things don't allow that to happen. And so with Family Bridges, we are committed to empowering families, couples, individuals, to gain those relationship skills that will transform their lives, but as well as those of the community.

So in talking about fatherhood and how important the presence of fathers is, we know that that's the case and we know that when fathers are not present, there's all sorts of risks that kids engage in, unwanted pregnancies, increasing suicide ideation, higher dropout rates, and on and on. And this is very concerning, because 53 [percent] of all pregnancies today are of unwed mothers, and that 63 percent of those are Hispanic. So we need to activate and motivate our Latino fathers to be engaged and involved, and we know that that's the case, but how do we do that?

And what I would suggest is that we begin with ourselves. What is the image that we have of our fathers? What would we like for them to have? Because what we do and how we do it, it needs to be informed not just by really good recruitment strategies, but by the vision that we have of our fathers. I had proposed that without a vision, there really isn't a purpose. And if we don't have a purpose, then we're going to reduce our fathers and families to a lot of really good and isolated activities. But they are often interventions that fall short and disappoint. So I'd invite you to think about what is the vision that you have, and how do you convey that to your participants?

We've been on this journey for a while. We began mining the data sets of thousands of participants that have been attending our programs. What drew the attention is that, overwhelmingly, they indicated that what drew them to the program and helped them change were the roleplays and the stories that were conveyed by very dynamic facilitators and mentors.

And so we were really curious about this, and we then decided to dig a little bit deeper. We did some focus groups very rigorously with a lot of coding, a lot of bilingual professionals that were trained for the task. And basically, our participants told us that they changed not just because of the skill sets that they learned. That was valuable. But they

talked about three components: self-awareness, decision, and the resources. What was interesting was I heard them speak about this. I resonated with the story and I knew it very well.

My own father, for example, he comes from a single-parent family home. At the age of eight years old, his mother, raising six children, she felt the hardship and stress. And this was back in the Dominican Republic. And so she sent them via train to his father, and that's where the story of neglect begins that many of us are familiar as we listen to other fathers tell their story. He was lost at a train station, no one to pick him up. You can imagine an eight-year-old kind of lost. But somehow, because of the kindness of strangers, he arrives with his father.

And there's the tragic story that is pretty abusive. His stepmother chooses to just do all sorts of terrible things to him -- spills a boiling pot of water on him, for example. And so during the day, though, he learns with his father a trade. And he ultimately becomes a proficient carpenter. Now, my father could have stayed in this morbid and abusive past, but he decided to live out a different narrative. Later on, as an adult, he really understood the context of a mentor in his life, that holding on to such bitterness and hatred over his mom, that that would only lead him to just repeat that same cycle of violence. So he wanted something different, and he chose to forgive anyways.

So his story is a story that has really empowered us to have a different narrative, and he decided to do something different and create a new legacy for his family. That's the story that we hear on and on again with our families that we serve. They've got a sense of self-awareness. Someone intervened in their life, and then they made a decision to change, just like my father decided to change and support his stepmother financially, even after his own father passed away. And then, people enter into a process of change where they decide to gain resources and to understand that it's not just a one-day decision, but that they need to follow that with actions.

This is a quote from one of our participants. It comes from our culture from far back, from our grandparents, from our parents, in the way we raise our children. I think it's there that responsibility comes from. So these as individuals as they understand through our programs that self-awareness. And then that, then, drives them towards making a decision:

"I'm going to listen, I'm going to go to my son. I'm going to ask him for forgiveness for the mistake I made, and that is not going to take me to have less authority with my son. Instead, he's going to learn that when you make a mistake you have to learn to ask for forgiveness. That is what he will learn from his father."

So here you could see the determination and the decision to go ahead and move forward.

And then folks say that that's not enough, right? That it's not good enough to just make a decision. That it has to be followed up and that that is a process. And here is another participant speaking into that process:

"You don't learn everything all at once, it is a constant learning and I always bring this to the table, I think for me, living with my wife, my spouse for 22 years, is an eternal beginning, day by day we keep knowing each other because day by day, we keep understanding those virtues, the talents that we have [and] that we keep discovering."

And so across the board, you hear, as we did these focus groups and as we met with folks, that what really struck a chord is the power of story. So Family Bridges, we embarked on learning a little bit more about story, and what we ended up doing was studying Miguel Sabido. He was a producer, a social scientist, and he pioneered this new methodology in the 1970s in Mexico, where he basically used entertainment as a way to bring about change. And his study has been taken worldwide. His programs are worldwide, and they've been responsible for showing phenomenal outcomes in social science area and the area of literacy, domestic violence and on and on.

And he speaks to these four components that are very essential as you're bringing in a new narrative to our fathers. You know, how are we as facilitators as we are engaging with our fathers? We want to give them a new story, a story of hope. One that propels them toward that vision. How do we do that well?

Well, he speaks to these four components that I think are lessons that we can learn in our work as we go about and deliver services to our fathers. One of them is this idea of master experiences. And again, this is all based on the theory of change that is based on self-efficacy. And that's that idea that when we feel we have the power to change our actions, we have control over our lives. And we know that our fathers have a lot of challenges. They have a lot of frustrations. There's all sorts of setbacks that come along their way, but they're able to persevere. When people persevere, that is what self-efficacy is.

And so Sabido proposes that we basically have role models that show the struggle, that are honest, that are very real. And as they progress and they show the mastery, and they show the self-pride in their accomplishments, that something happens in the life of the listener of that person that is influenced and says, "Oh. They're being real. That's true. I can then identify with that, and then also activate that change in me as well." Social modeling, the idea that the people that are presenting the program, that they look like me, that I can identify with them. That they are representative of my cultural background. So it makes, again, that story be more authentic.

Social persuasion. You know, with the Latino community, there's a strong sense of value towards authority. And here, the concept of having individuals that have authority, that are well-respected fathers in the community, the local doctor, the priest, the deejay, the radio program, who's who that then could speak into the life of that individual so that that story could be conveyed.

And then how important it is to tap into the physical and emotional states as well. That emotional embellishment, of course, we understand it in soap operas. You hear it all the time. It's very emotive, very dramatic. But we bring that as well in our workshops and our classes, tap into the senses of the individual. So it's not just verbal information or a long list of how to communicate, but that you're really tapping into that emotional fear of the individual.

And you could see in this slide what I mean by that and the power of story. Story, unlike information, is stored in long-term memory. So when you see this, you see a round, plain figure whose boundary consists of points equidistant from a fixed center. That's a very long definition of circle. But once you see the visual cue, it's fast. It's quick. That's the power of story. It's in essence, a picture. And you're taking that to that long-term memory.

Renee Brown keenly observes in her new book "Rising Strong" that stories are in the DNA, and there's all sorts of fascinating new research that speaks to how cortisol and oxytocin are released upon telling a story. So basically, when we tell a story, we're telling folks a picture. And that's something that they can access and that they can relate to in a powerful way.

So we have a quick radio piece that we're going to play for you. It's a couple minutes long, and it gives you a concept or an idea of how we've taken story and taking it out to make that tangible to the folks that we serve. So we'll have them play that for you.

[Spanish radio broadcast plays - Translation]

Host: Family Bridges presents: *Qué Gente, Mi Gente!*

During the last episode of *Qué Gente, Mi Gente!* Samantha and Columbo had a confrontation in the middle of the festival. Soon after being offended by Columbo, Jenny and Samantha leave. Now, Alex tries to talk to Columbo.

- Alex:** Columbo, stop drinking and let's go.
- Columbo:** Ay, Alex. I'm not drunk. I'm fine... Waitress, two tequilas.
- Alex:** Make that two waters, please.
- ...and I know you've been dating Jenny. Why are you denying being the father of the baby?
- Columbo:** Alex, no woman is going to tie me down. Not with a kid. Not with threats. Not with anything.
- Alex:** She's not that type of woman. She doesn't deserve you treating her that way.
- Columbo:** I can't deal with a pregnancy right now. You don't understand. I've been a problem child in my house since I was born.
- Alex:** We all have issues with our parents, you're not the only one.
- Columbo:** Why does the baby have to be mine? It can be anybody's. But no. Because I'm the black sheep, I always get blamed for everything
- Alex:** You know what? I think it's better if we leave now.
- Columbo:** No, no, no. The party is still going, Alex. Hey, beautiful!

[End of broadcast]

Dr. Alicia La Hoz: Alright, so hopefully that gives you a little taste of how we've taken that story and turned it into an entertainment industry. With Family Bridges, now we have this radio program that started airing in January. It's in 25 countries. But it's basically built on this methodology where we've taken story and the *radio novelas* that are very popular, and use that as a method to gauge and introduce the concepts that we want to introduce. It's just two minutes a day, and it has a reflection at the end with the punchline, and a blog where listeners can listen to and learn more about this information.

So this gives you an example. Now, you don't have to do a radio program in your programs to use the power of story. But you can definitely understand how it draws individuals in as we integrate them and really provides individuals with a sense of a new narrative that they can integrate with their lives.

My vision for the Latino families that we serve is that they are empowered, that our fathers are empowered for their children to grow, and that they can learn and foster the relationship with their children. And we want to teach our kids great skills. And these are incredibly valuable, but we won't have them be able to integrate them if they're not able to understand their shame story and grow from that experience to create a new pathway.

And so it's important for us to address that shame narrative that some fathers may have bought into to inspire creational and family vision statement, for example, or a fatherhood vision statement that then provides them a purpose and then allows for those skill sets to fall in line. And then to have fathers share their stories of similar struggles and setbacks, ways that they have succeeded their goals, and then for them to learn to respect that change progress.

We have this, again with the *Qué Gente, Mi Gente!* radio program, you can listen to that in the website and I'm sure we'll provide that information towards the end, but just encourage us to have that vision for our fathers that is

different, and that we create a new pathway, a new narrative for them that then leads them toward change, and for them to engage for their children.

That's all I have for you today. Thank you.

Jen McHenry: Great. Thank you so much, Alicia. That was excellent. And in reference to the radio program and the website, we do have a link to the Family Bridges website in that Web Links box. So if you'll look down for our attendees, on that last one you'll see NRFC website. It'll say Guide to a Healthy Marriage Resource Center. There should be a little scroll bar. If you scroll down, we have the link to the National Compadres Network, Family Bridges and Children's Shelter. If you click from your screen here you'll get taken straight to that website and take a look at both the radio program and the other great work being done.

Before we move on, Alicia, could you mention again the author of that narrative report that you were talking about and possibly share in the chat box the spelling? We had a couple of questions come in about people interested in learning a little bit more.

Dr. Alicia La Hoz: You mean Miguel Sabido? He's the entertainment educator. So he's got great information. So he's got a lot of books and I can pull that at the end and get you the exact name, but it's "Entertainment, Education and Social Change" by Miguel Sabido. And then the radio program is in 25 countries, a bunch of different radio stations. The best way to see that is to do quegentemigente.com, or our website has that link. I see some questions about that as well.

Jen McHenry: Fantastic. That was excellent. So keep the questions coming, everyone. We've got a lot of really good things to get to at the end but first, we're going to take a quick poll question before we move on to Jose's presentation. So this is a question for those on the line about your program staff:

"Which of the following best describes your fatherhood program?"

- All of your program staff are bilingual and provides all of your materials in both English and Spanish.
- Some of your program staff are bilingual and provide most of your program materials in English and Spanish.
- We have few bilingual staff and consultants and try to provide materials in Spanish when possible.
- Or no, at this time we have no bilingual staff."

Or if you're unsure, or you fall somewhere outside of this, you can vote as well.

Not surprisingly, given the high percentage of Latino families that some of the programs indicated at the beginning, it looks like most of you have some materials in English and Spanish and some materials that are bilingual. So it's very interesting and good to keep in mind as we move forward about connecting with programs.

And so with that, I'm going to turn this over to Jose Muñoz who will tell us more about his work and experiences as well. So Jose, the time is yours.

Jose Muñoz: Yes, thank you very much. Thank you to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse for having me on as a presenter, and good morning to those where it's still morning, and good afternoon to those that it's now afternoon.

I'm going to talk to you really quick about our program, the children's shelter *Compadre y Compadre* Program. A little about the Children's Shelter, we are a non-profit organization. We are accredited by the Council on Accreditation. Our children's shelter and family strengthening programs have served over 4,000 children. Those are vulnerable children, and we have families as well that we're working with all the families.

We've been in progress since 1901, and we've provided a safe haven for all our children that come from abuse, abandonment or neglect in San Antonio and Bexar County. We have three different types of programs. We have the emergency shelter, which houses all our children in a shelter, and we have the residential treatment center as well that houses our emotionally disturbed children, and then we have our foster care and adoption program that we try to find those forever homes for those children that need adoptive parents, or parents to make them their own.

And then we have our family strengthening programs. Our family strengthening programs consist of our Nurse-Family Partnership Program, our iParent Program, and of course our *Compadre y Compadre* program.

Now, back in 2008 we were serving families to help them with teen parenting, and also parenting just with females. But we saw the need for males. We saw the need to have a class for the dads, because we're seeing dads show up. So in 2008, through a grant with the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County and the Children's Shelter we were able to open up our *Compadre y Compadre* Program. And since implementation, we're able to serve over 1,500 males, and 200 have stayed as mentors. And I'll get into the mentor program here in a little bit.

Some of the demographics that we have, we had 78 percent Latino dads, and then 22 percent are other backgrounds that we serve. Here are some of the other demographics about education, low income -- I'm not going to read all those to you. That way I can go on to the presentation.

Now, working with Latino males, we need to understand the culture. Like Jerry was saying earlier, we need to understand culture, the language, religion and traditions. There is a lot of dads that come into our program that come from all walks of life. They come from the Latino background and then from other backgrounds as well. We have dads that come into our program that are CEO's from companies, some from military, and then we have some that are mandated to come to our program.

Now, we need to understand the role that the Latino male plays in the family structure. The negative stereotype that's out there about males being dads is that they're either the provider, the disciplinarian, or even just the baby maker. That's that negative stereotype that we want to break. We want to be able to say that the Latino male or any dad can be a positive role model for our children.

Now, working with Latino males, we have English and Spanish classes. So it's very important that we touch on both aspects. We have all our forms and surveys both in English and in Spanish. We have our curriculum in English and in Spanish. We always have to demonstrate respect, because a lot of our dads that come in, we have dads that are 15 years old all the way to 65. So we want to teach our dads to become that positive role model. We want to teach our dads to become that dad that they want their daughters to see and look up to, their sons to see and look up to. So we help to demonstrate respect.

Now, we help them understand the important role that they play in a child's life. Now, we're not trying to take anything away from the mothers, because it's very important to have equal participation from mom and dad.

Now, we look at the Spanish word *compadre*, which refers to a bond. Now, if you Google it, it says: "a way of addressing or referring to a friend or companion." Now, in the Hispanic culture, we use *compadre* as a co-father or a co-parent. It's a relationship between parents. Once they baptize their child, they become their godparent. So here in

the Compadre y Compadre program, we use it not only to that point, but we use it for so much more. We use it such as a friend, a confidante, just someone they can speak to.

We help, here at the Compadre program, we use the Nurturing Fathers program, which helps connect their heart and their heads to become one. So it's a lot of disconnect between their heart on what they feel they should do, and what they're thinking they should do. So we try to connect both of them to make it one.

Safety is always created through small groups and interactions. In our program, and I'll be talking about the program in a little bit, but we do exercises, we do relationship and bonding, and then we do some homework. We believe in non-violent parenting through the development of empathy. Every dad that comes to the program will sign a non-violent kind of contract, that way they say: "While I'm in the program and after I leave the program, I promise I will not be a violent father" or "I promise I will not teach fear to my children." Because a lot of times, like I said earlier, the dads are the disciplinarians. Well, there's a difference between teaching and discipline. So we'll talk about that in just a little bit.

Now here's the program designed for the Compadre y Compadre program. It's broken down into three components. The first component in our first two weeks is Daddy Boot Camp. We teach the dads such as nutrition, developmental milestones, from zero all the way to 18, we teach Dads and Diapers. It's a little session about dads and diapers, because a lot of dads don't know how to change their children. We teach about nurturing touch and healthy touch, because the first line of communication with a child is that healthy touch. It is that nurturing touch. Then we teach about SIDS [Sudden Infant Death Syndrome] and then Shaken Baby Syndrome [SBS]. We use our Reality Works babies. They have a clear head and it shows on the spots if you shake the baby, it starts to light up and if you shake the baby a lot, then the baby stops crying, and it indicates death at that point. And it's a big visualization for the gentlemen, and you see their eyes light up, and so we use that in the class. And that happens in the first two weeks.

The next component is the Nurturing Fathers program. It's actually 13 weeks long. During that program, we teach such things as roots of fathering. You know, what is the root of their fathering? How is it that they saw their dad, and what kind of dad they want to be? Then we teach about the little boy within. What kind of cultures that they come from, what was their cultural background? Who is the little boy within them? What is their unmet need?

We also talk about the power to meet their own needs, principles and values. We talk about male nurturance, how to relate to others' feelings. Then we talk about fathering without violence and fear. You know, you want to be able to discipline your children without the fear of violence. And then we talk about overcoming barriers, and then discipline versus punishment. A lot of dads feel that discipline and punishment are the same, but in actuality, they're totally different.

We talk about fathering sons and fathering daughters, the different aspects on how to father a son and how to father a daughter. Then we talk about teamwork -- not only teamwork with your children, but teamwork with your spouse, teamwork with your ex-spouse or your girlfriend or your ex-girlfriend. Because a lot of dads that come in are single or divorced, and we want to talk to them and let them know that it's not about them. It's about that child that's growing up, about that child that they're raising together, whether you're married or you're not married.

We talk about a time and place for fathering and healing the father wound. Healing the father wound, we have a great exercise where we put all the fathers around in a circle, and we have fathers standing behind them. And then we ask them one word. We ask them, "If your dad was here right now, what would you want your dad to tell you?" A lot of times they say: "I would like my dad to say: 'I love you, son,' or 'you're my number one.'"

So as the dads are sitting down in that circle, we ask them to put their head down, and then the other fathers that are standing behind them will repeat that to them, and they go around the circle until they've reached everyone, and then they switch off. This is very powerful for the gentlemen to have a male figure, a male role model, telling them,

another male, “I love you, son. You’re the best thing that ever happened to me. You’re my number one.” And it’s very powerful for them. Some of the dads start crying. Some of the dads have to take a moment and go out of the classroom and just take a moment to re-gather themselves.

The last component of our Compadre y Compadre program is the mentoring program. Now, the mentoring program, this is when they complete the graduation and the first two components. They’re able to get into our mentor program, and the mentor program is also an evidence-based curriculum that we use is the Abriendo Puertas curriculum, and it’s able to have the father be the school’s liaison. So we help address school readiness with parents. We help them become stronger advocates for their children in school. Some of the goals for the Abriendo Puertas program is to increase confidence about parenting skills, increase the knowledge and the success of health services, increase social support and social connections, and then increase community involvement.

Now, the community involvement that we do, we have four community projects a year that we do. Although our mentor coordinator has made it a point that every month we’re going to be doing a community project. We have things such as Elf Louise. We have the San Antonio Food Bank. We do the furniture bank, and even our own children’s shelter. We have our mentors that came out to the program, and we needed to re-mulch our playground area, and all the mentors came out. We had about 35 mentors that came out just to help. And we always do that. Every month we have a different community event that they go out and just help. They just want to give back to the community.

We also have mentors that will just come back to the program that just want to help in the program, either serving to provide lunch for the other dads that are going through the program. Or even, as mentors finish, we have a mentor sitting in the classroom with a parent educator to help teaching the class, because it’s always great to have someone say, a dad can always tell us, “Well, you don’t know where I’ve been, because you haven’t been there.” Well, we have that mentor in the class saying, “That’s okay. I’ve been where you’re at, and I’m here right now.” So it’s really great to hear a mentor go into a classroom and be able to explain his story and be able to just utilize his background to help another gentleman.

Like I said, we have our mentors that are coming into the program. They help complete the 15- week program. We do the four community projects, and they help prepare meals. We have one mentor that comes every week. He graduated two years ago, and he still comes every week on Wednesday just to help out because he really believes in the program. He really says that he needs to give back to the program because it helped him develop that relationship with his kids.

Now, whenever possible, we need to hire bilingual staff. All my staff are bilingual, and all the classes are for men, taught by men. So we need to ensure that we receive cultural competency training each year. Each year through our children’s shelter, we receive our cultural competency training, and it really helps us connect with the gentlemen that we’re serving.

Conduct satisfaction surveys. At the end of the program, the end of 15 weeks, we always do a satisfaction survey. Now, some dads, they come to the program in the beginning [and] say, “Fifteen weeks is too long. I can’t be here 15 weeks. Can you make it shorter? Can I do a one-day class on a Saturday?” Unfortunately, because the way the program is designed, we have to do the 15 weeks. Now, during the end, when we do the satisfaction survey, one of the questions on the satisfaction survey is, “What is it that the program can do to improve?” And some of the answers that they give us is, “I wish the program was longer,” which is really great because when they first come in, they want a one-day program, and now they want a longer program.

Become flexible with your hours with working with Latino dads or for any dads, because it is very important that you have daytime hours for those that are working in the evening. Especially with a lot of Latino fathers, sometimes they

work in the evening, sometimes they work in the morning. So you have to have that flexibility. Have some daytime classes. Also have some evening classes.

Be open to engaging your partners. We have several partners with our United Way of San Antonio/Bexar County that we'd like to invite, or any community partner in your area that you have. Just make sure that you invite them to your program. Invite them to the graduations and celebrate anything big or small. Be able to share that with your partners. That way they can help you, and you can help them at the same time.

And then also be open to recognizing areas of improvement. You know, your program can always improve no matter how big or how small your program is. It can always improve. And just be open to that.

Now this last picture here is my information. And that picture right there that you see is a small graduation that we had, I believe that was about 30 dads that we graduated at that point. When the program first started, we were graduating about 12 dads per graduation, and now we're graduating anywhere from 40 to 60 dads every graduation. We have a graduation every other month. We have them six times a year.

Thank you very much for listening to me about our Compadre y Compadre program.

Jen McHenry: Thank you, Jose. That was fantastic. So interesting and so great, what you guys have built out there.

So we're going to move on to the Question and Answer, and get to some of the questions that people have asked. I will preface this by, we'll probably actually only have time for this first question. Then we're going to get some feedback questions in to give us at the Clearinghouse some information on how we did today so we can do better next time, and then I'll ask each of our presenters to give a closing thought. But again, feel free to continue asking questions. Feel free to send some questions to info@fatherhood.gov. Again, we will get to address the remaining questions that we don't get to right now after the fact, because these are very insightful questions and some really fantastic experiences here with us with our presenters today.

So the question I wanted to ask, and this is going to be for everyone. I think we'll start with Alicia and Jose and then Jerry, go through the range of your feedback. In terms of recruitment, Alicia mentioned having a vision and purpose. Jose mentioned how many people you have now going through the entire length of your program. How is it that you work on getting buy-in through that process? So you have to get a father in the door, and again, the Fatherhood Toolkit on fatherhood.gov does have some information on recruitment strategies. You have to get someone in and then you have to keep someone in, and those are really difficult challenges. What are some of the ways that you address those with the groups that you are working with? We'll start with Alicia.

Dr. Alicia La Hoz: Thank you. It's a great question. We have, in the focus groups we've asked that and, funny enough, what they say is that usually they go because their spouses dragged them in. So our program tends to be more marriage than relationship program. We have a lot of men, 50 percent of the men that are fathers that we serve, but they come into the door because of the women. And so we figured out how to equip the women, the spouses and their partners in order to give them good tips of how to do that. We'd be happy to share that with you, but also, the Toolkit has some of that information.

And then, how do we engage them? You know, I focused a lot on the narrative, but there is something that's a little bit addictive when you have that power of story. And the entertainment industry has really done this phenomenally well. That's why you see people so engaged in soap operas in the Latino community or it was comedy or just anything, most of us are really engaged with that medium.

And so, how can we make sure that our programs have that excellence in them along the way? We just make sure that each program is engaging enough. It's got something that's very exciting for folks and that they can relate to. If

it's completely, like [unintelligible] spoken, if it's just translated and it doesn't have that sense that they can resonate because it doesn't have that cultural component, then people are just put off by that. So that's another important component as we're trying to engage fathers throughout the course of their time with us during the workshops.

And then constantly respecting our fathers. So they're there, and we have an activity. In our case, when it's a couple, just recognizing them and giving them the opportunity to engage saying, if it's a homework assignment, for example, giving it to the father. Just giving them that much respect within the context of the class itself.

And then the last recruitment strategy for us is actually having a wonderful children's program. So if we have a great children's program, then they seem to do a great job recruiting their parents as well, so that's kind of different. I know we didn't speak about that, but at least for our programs, we have found that that was something that we didn't expect, but in spending just a little time and making sure, we tend to have child care at our programs, and so instead of it just being child care, we make sure that that program is wonderful. And the kids seem to really bug their parents to bring them back. That's kind of different, but I wanted to put it out there.

Jen McHenry: That's great. Thank you so much, Alicia. That's really engaging the whole family in the programming and also, that in making the engagement, I think sometimes we forget that when you're presenting a program, you forget that sitting through a program is sometimes a very different experience.

Jose, would you like to weigh in?

Jose Muñoz: Yes. Thank you. Yes, I'd like to chime in. Some of the recruitment strategies that we have is that we partner up with different people. Partnering up with child protective services, juvenile probation, [and] adult probation. We've done some radio ads that we were lucky enough to get on the radio. I know that sometimes with nonprofit agencies, it's really hard to get radio ads or any TV time. Also, we just had people look online. They're looking for a parenting program and they see the children's shelter and they see the Compadre y Compadre program, and they call. It's about that first interaction with them on how you talk about your program with that person and how you entice them.

I think it's really important, like Alicia was saying, it's about that respect that you have for that person, no matter from whatever walk of life they came from, you have that respect for that person just coming to the program.

Then we also do different community events. We've gone to different school events, different church events, some Head Start program events. And then people just come by your table. They hear about your program, you talk to them about your program, and then they decide to come.

Another thing that really entices our dads, actually, to come to the program, or even stay in the program is the fact of we're able to feed our dads. We give them a light meal. Some of the dads that come to the program in the evening time say I'm coming straight from work. Well, we realize that, so we provide a light meal for them, or we provide a light lunch for them.

We also, the Compadre y Compadre program, also does child care for them, and we make sure that the children are safe and they're being cared for by a child care staff while the dad is in class. Now, what we ask our dads to do is, during your break time, that you eat with your kids, because it's very important to have that meal time with your kids, especially if you bring your kids with you. So we are able to do that, and that's how we recruit. That's how we keep them in the class, and we keep them motivated to stay in the class.

Jen McHenry: Excellent. Thank you so much, Jose. And definitely -- and someone said this in the chat, but yes -- food always gets my attention as well. It kind of pairs up with the child care in thinking about, again, that whole family and that whole person as you spoke to as well.

For our wrap-up, we have a lot of really great questions and we will address them later, but on this topic of recruitment and getting dads in, Jerry, you have a really, really extensive background in different kinds of programming and working with lots of different environments. So could you share some of what you've learned with us as well to close out, a final authoritative word? [Pause] Is Jerry still on with us? Maybe on mute?

Operator: It looks like you did disconnect. Just one moment.

Jen McHenry: Sure. We will all be waiting in suspense. We'll get Jerry to answer that for us after the fact if we don't get to connect with him again. We're going to -- [voices speaking simultaneously]. Are you there, Jerry?

Jerry Tello: Yeah, I am. Yes. Okay. Well, a lot of what has been mentioned are very excellent points. One of the things that I'd like to emphasize is how your organization is structured and the philosophy and how embracing the families and especially the fathers feel you are, are going to make a big difference. Fathers talk to fathers, families talk to families. And if you have a good reputation for respecting, honoring, embracing fathers and their families without judgment, then that's going to be an easier avenue to want to go. We work with a lot of fathers that have issues that are wounds that have been in prison or on probation, or on the streets or in neighborhoods and in cliques and gangs.

We work with fathers that are immigrant fathers that are documented, some non-documented, and they want to know that if they're going to come there, they're going to be embraced without judgment. So a lot of times, what's real important is for staff, for an organization to really understand fathers, Latino fathers, Latino issues, all of those things. And I think that it's not just enough to have a curriculum or to train staff or just even cultural competence training. But it's really how you gear your organization and really prepare to really embrace fathers and embrace families and embrace issues without judgment. And also, lift up the positive cultural essence of the families and the fathers you're working with.

So anyway, I'll leave it there. We do a lot of that training, a lot of capacity building, a lot of systems change, a lot of all of that. That's a lot of what we do.

Jen McHenry: Great. Thank you so much. Well thank you to Jerry, to Alicia, to Jose for presenting with us and being with us today. Really excellent information that you shared. Really wonderful experiences of learning.

I think from the chat function, from the initial feedback we've been getting, people are agreeing with me. Some really great feedback. Thank you all for taking the time to be with us today. I know we're all very, very busy. We definitely appreciate you taking your time with us today.

We do have, like I said, have some quick feedback questions we're going to ask you so that we here at the Clearinghouse can do our job better in providing information and services to you. And then I'm going to ask Jerry, Alicia and Jose to give us a quick last thought before we send everybody home.

So our first question should be appearing on your screen any moment now, that "This webinar increased my knowledge about successful strategies for working with Latino fathers." And the answers are: strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree, and also a no vote, if you so choose. So again, "This webinar increased my knowledge about successful strategies for working with Latino fathers."

And we're going to move on to question number two, so thank you all for that. And that's coming up here. And question number two, that "The presenters effectively communicated their expertise." That "The presenters effectively communicated their expertise. Strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree, and no vote." We'll give everyone just one more quick moment if they're on the fence.

Okay, evaluation question number three will be popping up just momentarily: “In general, I received good information resources that I can use in my work with fathers and families.” So, “In general, I received good information and resources that I can use in my work with fathers and families.” And very similar to questions one and two, our responses are strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree, and no vote. One more.

Okay, and our very last feedback question is -- Oh, you know what, I think we’ll actually pull this up after we hear our final feedback. We’re going to ask everybody to give us, if you have any suggestions on future topics. So before we get to that, we’ll get our final closing thoughts, first from Jerry.

Jerry Tello: Well, I’d like to thank my fellow presenters for the work they do, and all those that have chosen to really embrace Latino fathers and families. I think it’s a real critical issue. I want to impress upon communities to really speak up on behalf of the needs of Latino fathers and families. Latino children are the fastest-growing population. And to understand that the issues that are being faced in communities are nationwide. Issues of immigration, issues of racism and discrimination are all part of this same picture as well, and to become advocates along with fathers and families to really bring wholeness and respect for all people that way. And I appreciate those people that are doing the work and really just want to thank you for being interested in serving our families. Thank you.

Jen McHenry: Thank you so much, Jerry. And Alicia?

Dr. Alicia La Hoz: You know, I want to pick up on a lot of the questions about retention and engagement. And I would just go back to what motivates us. And what motivates us is the sense of being valued. You know, that whole self-esteem piece. And we value individuals when we recognize who they are and what their stories are, and we respect them in the context of the programs that we offer. And so just how important that is, and people also feel motivated when they have that small achievement, and being able to just walk with people and recognize those small achievements that they’ve made, as well as when we tell those stories of ourselves or others as they grow, to celebrate that as much as possible. As we do that that certainly motivates people along that pathway of change and catalyzes them towards achieving their purpose for their life as well as that vision they have for themselves and for their families.

Jen McHenry: Excellent. Thank you, Alicia. And Jose, some final thoughts?

Jose Muñoz: Again, I also, like Jerry, want to thank my fellow co-presenters Jerry and Alicia. And everyone that chimed in, thank you for staying on and listening to us present. One thing I’d like to say is like Alicia, it’s all about the respect that you have for the dad that you are working with, whether it’s a Latino dad or a non-Latino dad. It’s how you respect them and also to keep them accountable. We want our dads to be great dads. We want our dads to be great fathers and just to be there for their children.

Jen McHenry: Great. Thank you so much. Again, one more time, thank you so much to Jerry, Alicia and Jose for taking the time to present and share with us. Thank you, all of you who attended and took your time today with us to learn more about this topic. Again, some contact information for you. If you have any questions or follow-up for us at the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, you can contact us at info@fatherhood.gov. We also have some information on contacting today’s presenters. And again, slides will be up I believe in two weeks on the website. You can sign up for our Listserv to get more information on when those are posted and when we have upcoming events.

And as we close out, I’m going to put up a slide, feedback for you. If you have any suggestions for future webinars, topics that you would really like to see that you think would help improve the work that you do, we ask you to leave them here. And that will conclude what we have for you today. Thank you again for attending. Thank you again to our presenters, and enjoy the rest of your afternoon.



Operator: Again, that does conclude today's conference. We appreciate everyone's participation. Bye-bye.