ALIANZAS INSIGHTS

Cambio de Colores 2015

A recurring column by Alianzas coordinator Gerardo R. Martinez

The 14th Annual Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors) Conference took place June 10-12, 2015 on the campus of University of Missouri-Kansas City. The theme of the conference was Shaping the Future: Leadership for Inclusive Communities. Tracks included education, health, English Language Learner (ELL) and Dual Language Education, youth development, changing communities, and economic development and civic engagement.

More than ever before, this year’s conference drew attendees from across the United States. Over

MISSION:
To build effective intercultural communication and alliances between MU Extension, Latino residents, and the larger community.

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SPOTLIGHT ON MU CAMBIO CENTER

Since 2004, the Cambio Center at the University of Missouri has drawn researchers from a variety of disciplines to a common agenda: combine expertise to better understand our larger immigration picture and changing communities.

The center began when MU faculty noticed a spike in the number of Latino immigrants arriving in Missouri, but found little research on best practices to assist their integration. They also saw that Missouri communities would benefit from collaborative, interdisciplinary research to help prepare for greater diversity. The handful of researchers soon grew to become 40 Cambio fellows, and the center established its annual conference.

Stephen Jeannetta, Interim Director of the Cambio Center, believes the annual conference provides excellent opportunities to network with others who share an interest in fostering inclusive communities.

“Participants walk away with a better idea of how the pieces fit together, and how they can broaden the picture of an inclusive community when they return home,” said Jeannetta.

Lindsey Saunders, Cambio Center Coordinator, says holding this year’s conference at UMKC was the right choice. “Being in Kansas City gave participants access to stellar examples of strong community organizations doing great work with immigrants. It’s helpful for those with more recent immigrant waves to see.”
HIGHLIGHTS OF HISPANIC/LATINO OUTREACH PROGRAMS THAT WORK IN MISSOURI | PB

170 people attended from 17 states, including participants from the Midwest region and as far as Oregon, Minnesota, Maryland, Alabama, and Texas. Culturally diverse educators and community leaders came with a common goal: to help build more inclusive communities!

One of the conference’s highlights was the dramatic performance of Vang, which means “farm” or “garden” in the Hmong language. The play depicts the real life journeys of four immigrant couples, all farmers, who come to the United States from different parts of the globe. Vang brought tears to the eyes of many audience members as they responded to stories of courage, devotion, dedication, hope, and freedom. The drama increased viewers’ personal humility and appreciation of the immigrants in our midst. Learn more about Vang

Another defining feature of this year’s conference was an opportunity for attendees to visit one of five different Kansas City community organizations. Alianzas was instrumental in laying the foundation for the tours, which included Mattie Rhodes Center, Kansas City Hispanic Economic Development Corporation, Alta Vista Charter Schools - Guadalupe Educational Systems, Inc., Kansas City Public Schools New American Academy Enrichment Program, and Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center. We thank each of these organizations for the well-prepared, professional, and warm welcome they provided! • Learn more about Cambio de Colores

INTRODUCING THE ALIANZAS AMBASSADORS

Alianzas is excited to welcome 17 MU Extension Specialists from all seven regions in its new Ambassador program. Ambassadors were chosen by recommendation of their respective regional directors for their interest in and ability to work across cultures. They seek to diminish the barrier of cultural differences in their regions and welcome immigrants to MU programs. •

WEST URBAN
Daniel Cash, Community Development
Richard Zarate, Business

EAST URBAN
Idalia McNulty, Nutrition
Elizabeth Warner, Nutrition
Robert Russell, Labor Education

SOUTHWEST
Karla Deaver, 4H Youth
Jim Wirth, Human Development

WEST CENTRAL
Danna Pournelle, 4H Youth

NORTHWEST
Beverly Maltzberger, Community Development
Mererdith Berry, Family Financial Education
Shanshan Chen, Nutrition

NORTHEAST
Tracy Daugherty, Community Development
Tish Johnson, Community Development

EAST CENTRAL
Pablo Arroyo, Business Development
Elaine Anderson, 4H Youth

SOUTHEAST
Maude Harris, Nutrition & Health
Michael Milam, Agronomy