

MEDIA RELEASE

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Los Niños Bien Educados Hispanic parenting class a success

First group of Hispanic parents graduate from nationally ranked and accredited parenting program

(Oct. 23, 2009—St. Joseph, MO) Are 12 weeks learning good parenting skills time well spent? Absolutely—for the first six graduates of Los Niños Bien Educados courses, it is an important milestone toward strengthening families and the community.

Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph (CAP St. Joe) is proud to announce the first graduates of the recently launched Los Niños Bien Educados Hispanic parenting class. Bryan Figueroa, Denis Sontay, Sonia Chun, Saudi Diaz, Maria Schoepke, and Katie Perez will complete the program on Thurs. Oct 29 and graduate the same day.

“The Los Niños Bien Educados graduates made a commitment to themselves and their children, to be the best parents they can possibly be,” says Laura Bakken, Los Niños teacher and Spanish Interpreter for CAP. “I am so proud of them! My hope is that they will continue to apply the new skills they’ve learned in class and become role models for others.”

Los Niños Bien Educados is a nationally-ranked and accredited parenting program, developed by experts in the 1970s to honor and strengthen Latino family culture. *Los Niños Bien Educados* means “Well-Educated Children,” centering on the Latino notion of being *Bien Educado*, which emphasizes “well-educated” in a social sense as well as an academic sense.

Based on local community needs evaluations, Community Action implemented the program this summer to address the need for curriculum to build family strength in St. Joseph’s growing Latino culture. In 2007, St. Joseph was listed as having the fastest-growing population of Hispanic families in the nation by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The goals of the programs were:

- Increased parental confidence
- Reduced parental stress
- Improved parent-child relations
- Improved academic performance for children in school

A special emphasis of the program was integrating fathers in the family decision-making process and building peer networks among dads.

Brian Figueroa, a young immigrant of Guatemala, told the instructor at the beginning of the course that “I want to learn important things that as a young man, I haven’t learned, then teach the good things to my children when I become a father.” For him, the three most important things he has learned in the Los Niños program are: education starts in the home, how to teach children what’s good and bad for them, and the importance of dedicating special time to spend with the children.

The teacher of the course is Laura Bakken, CAP’s Spanish Interpreter and winner of the 2009 YWCA Women of Excellence “Woman in the Workplace” award. Bakken is certified in the Los Niños curriculum. “What an opportunity to make a positive impact in our community,” she says of the program, “Kids don’t come with instructions. However, thanks to the generosity of our funders, the Los Niños program has given the opportunity for some to be better equipped to handle the challenges parents face on a daily basis. Many people have helped make this program successful. I sincerely wish to thank everyone who has offered their support.”

Los Niños is offered in partnership with Triumph Foods, Circle of Hope and the Heartland Foundation, which helped provide curriculum for parents, instructional DVDS for community presentations about Latino culture, supplies for the program’s opening and graduation, mentoring opportunities for program graduates, and an on-site workshop on the curriculum.

For more information about the Los Niños program, contact Laura Bakken, Spanish interpreter for Head Start, Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph, at (816) 387-1065 or lbakken@endpov.com. “Los Niños Bien Educados” is produced by the Center for the Improvement of Child Care. Visit www.ciccparenting.org for more information about the curriculum.

Community Action Partnership has provided programs to move low-income families out of poverty since 1965, serving nearly 16,000 people in poverty in Northwest Missouri. Head Start is one of the core programs managed by the agency. Additional services provided by Community Action Partnership to low-income families include utilities assistance, affordable housing, financial literacy and home ownership classes, life skills and workforce training. For more information, visit www.endpov.com.