

CAUSA

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Our Mission

CAUSA, Inc., is dedicated to enhancing the overall well-being of the Hispanic/Latino population in Connecticut with special emphasis on advocacy, research and technical assistance through and with its member agencies.

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The Board of Directors, Congratulates Ms. Carmen Sierra who was chosen to attend the 2002 National Hispana Leadership Institute from a field of over 2000 applicants.

Project NEXO In Action!

CAUSA's Project NEXO is now a reality! According to a February 2002 study conducted by The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, "For the Latino community to advance its social, political and economic agenda, it must be a player in this new world of Information Technology. To participate, Latinos must be proficient in the basic tools of technology, such as computers and their applications. But to achieve proficiency, they must also achieve a much higher general level of education and adapt their cultural norms and behaviors to an entrepreneurial, fast-moving and global approach to business and life." Project NEXO is an important vehicle to achieve these aims.

In 2000, Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action, Inc. (CAUSA) was awarded one of 35 grants selected from 628 grant applications submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Technology Opportunities Program.

Project NEXO was designed to bridge the "Digital Divide" on behalf of Latinos and Hispanics in Connecticut. Connecticut was the only state to receive an award to create a national model for using community-based agencies and large non-profits to provide better services and increase access to educational opportunities.

The twelve computer sites, which opened in November 2001, are located in CAUSA's Hispanic/Latino agencies across the state. Five of the sites are "Core" public access computer sites with multiple computers and internet access in a classroom setting; seven of the current sites are "Connected" or mini-sites, with two computers with internet access. Since the sites became operational eight months ago, 4,048 individuals have accessed the centers, and many of our clients have received basic computer skills training, adult education training, are enrolled in on-

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Building Bridges Through Collaborations

On May 17th, CAUSA hosted a conference on "Community Collaboration and Resource Development". The conference brought together CAUSA member agencies and representatives from other Latino-serving groups to learn about how collaboration and resource development go hand-in-hand. Among the invited speakers were Superior Court Judge Carmen Lopez from Middletown, Ana Arroyo, Program Officer from Greater New Haven, Community Foundation, Jackie Fina, from Custom Communications, and Mr. Joseph Odell from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Office of Multicultural Affairs. Our conference theme reflected how CAUSA operates by connecting, communicating and collaborating.

Project NEXO, which is featured in this issue of the newsletter, is an example of the strength of collaboration. In order to make the project happen, CAUSA's member agencies came together with a number of other partners to make Project NEXO a reality. We are also very please to be working with Congressman John Larson of Connecticut's 1st District to secure funding for the continuation and expansion of Project NEXO. Congressman Larson is the chairman of the "Digital Divide" Caucus in Congress.

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PROJECT NEXO'S SUCCESS STORIES



Ms. Zhane Cardenas lives in Danbury and is a mother of two that works as a dental assistant in the town of Ridgefield. She came to CAUSA's Project NEXO classes with very little knowledge of computers. She is the best student in the class and she is able to type over thirty words per minute using the typing tutor. After Zhane learned how to use Windows 2000 and surf the internet she able to create her own internet account using AOL as her service provider. Zhane is a bright and motivated student that within a month's period of training she decided it was sufficient for her to move on to further her education. She is planning to take English composition at Western Connecticut State University.

Maria Marques of New Haven recently passed an employer's entry level test on basic computer knowledge after completing CAUSA's Project NEXO training at Latino Youth Development, Inc., in New Haven. The six week course was taught by Center Director Stephanie Torres and included Windows 2000 and the entire Microsoft Office suite. With the information she learned in the course she is now qualified to apply for a job with that company.

The Certified Nurse's Assistant program (CNA) at Centro De La Comunidad in New London acknowledged CAUSA's Project NEXO and Project NEXO Center Director Mr. Enoc Reyes, for the help and support provided to the CNA program and its students. Project NEXO provided the computers and Mr. Reyes provided the technical support to help them take on-line tests and English as a second language courses on the computers at the center. The CNA graduating class of 2002 presented plaques to Mr. Reyes and the Project NEXO team for their contributions. Many students were so pleased with the program that they decided to further their computer skills by enrolling in future classes at the center.

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"Project NEXO In Action!"

line college courses, and many have entered employment. By the end of March 2003 more than 10,000 clients of our member agencies will be benefiting from the services of Project NEXO sites.

CAUSA's Project NEXO is impacting lives of the individuals, communities and the State of Connecticut in several ways. CAUSA's Project NEXO services create a strong workforce for the future of Connecticut. CAUSA's Project NEXO provides its users with the computer skills necessary to being marketable in today's technological world. Employers will be able to spend more time getting their company's message out, rather than consuming a lot of extra time in training potential employees. Everyone's communities will benefit from new economic developments and businesses that will inevitably arise to accommodate trained and skilled labor.

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"Building Bridges Through Collaborations"

When asked about Project NEXO's impact in the community he said, "A gap in our nation along ethnic, gender, age and socioeconomic lines between those who have access to technology and those who do not. I am committed to closing this gap to ensure that Hispanic agencies who are members of CAUSA are equipped with the skills and technology required to compete as our economy and workforce moves forward. I applaud the hard work that CAUSA is devoting to this critical issue and will continue to do all I can to assist them."

In addition to Project NEXO, CAUSA is currently involved in a number of other collaborative efforts. Project DIAL: Diabetes Information and Action for Latinos is a joint effort with the Hispanic Health Council, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, Hartford Hospital, and Community Health Services to focus attention on a health issue that disproportionately affects Latinos. We are also working in close cooperation with Commissioner Joxel Garcia of Connecticut's Department of Health.

Another collaborative effort is a new project with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Office of Multicultural Affairs. This project focuses on training Latino community service providers and other community leaders in trauma response and prevention. Mr. Jose Ortiz, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, has been working with CAUSA to develop strategies for reaching out to the Latino community in the aftermath of September 11th. All Latino-serving organizations throughout Connecticut have been invited to participate in our training sessions, which will be held in July.

CAUSA and its member agencies have also been working with Connecticut Hispanics in Philanthropy a collaboration of funders committed to capacity building in Latino organizations. Marilda Gandara, President of the Aetna Foundation and Chairperson of the Connecticut Hispanics in Philanthropy, has been extremely helpful to CAUSA in suggesting ways for CAUSA to have a major impact in our work. We appreciate and give a special thank you to each and every person who has been willing to engage in these collaborative efforts. We know, and appreciate, that collaboration takes time and lots of effort more that working alone. We also know that the results will be greater and longer lasting than if we work independently.

Our current priority that will require major collaboration is our future funding. Let's stand together on this issue as well.



Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury, Inc.
Serving the Hispanic population since 1967

Executive Director

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Mission

The Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury, Inc., is a community based organization assisting the Latino population to enter and succeed in the social and economic mainstream of Danbury through:

Job placement and training

- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- General Equivalency Diploma
- Vocational Training
- Job Placement and Referrals

Education and counseling

- Health Education
- AIDS and Drug Awareness Education
- Pre and Postnatal Pregnancy, Counseling
- Services for Children with Special Needs
- AA Meetings
- Prevention of Domestic Violence
- Family Support Groups
- Parent School Orientation on Education
- College Orientation and Counseling

Social services

- Social Security and Disability
- Welfare
- Housing Landlord Mediation
- Immigration Orientation and Citizenship

EXECUTIVE PROFILE



María-Cinta Lowe,
Executive Director of
the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury, Inc.

María-Cinta is the Executive Director of the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury, a position she has occupied since 1990. She has been involved in the community since 1972, in a number of capacities. As an advocate for the Latino community she is an active participant in local events and organizations.

She is a firm believer in the power of education, that all children have the right to receive the best education possible in order to achieve their full potential and that it is

through education that children are able to achieve their goals. She is a strong voice for two-way bilingual education to help mainstream ESL students as well as to provide bilingual education to English speaking children. María-Cinta is currently an active board member of several Latino organizations and she is currently an advisory member of the Regional Commission Child Care Rights and Abuse.

AGENCY SUCCESS STORY

Marco and Luis Mizhirumbay, originally from Ecuador, began taking classes at the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury through CAUSA's Project NEXO last fall. After several weeks of taking classes, Marco asked Project NEXO Center Director, Daniel Lopes, to help him buy a computer so he could continue to practice what he had learned in class. As part of a class project, students conducted research on determining the best system to purchase. The class finally agreed that Hewlett Packard was the best system available for under \$1,000. Daniel accompanied Marcos in making the purchase, and then helped him setup the computer at home. With their new knowledge and computer, Marco and his brother have started their own construction company.

CAUSA PHOTO GALLERY



The Honorable John Martinez from New Haven was recognized by CAUSA's Board of Directors for his dedication and support to CAUSA's Many projects.



Project NEXO's Director Leslie Dunn instructing clients at a NEXO site on how to use Windows 2000.



Client's from the Spanish Speaking Center in New Britain, put their newly acquired skills to work during open lab hours at the center's Project NEXO computer lab.

Special Thanks To the many partners and supporters of CAUSA's Project NEXO.

SNET
United Way/Infoline
Department of Social Services (DSS)
Workforce/Career Development Partners
Charter Oak State College (COSC)
Connecticut Distance Learning
Consortium (CTDLC)
State Department of Education
State Vocational Technical Schools
Local Adult Education Programs
Connecticut Workforce
Development Council (CTWDC)
Department of Labor (DOL)
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Center Directors of Project NEXO

Jesús Pedraza, Casa Boricua of Meriden, Inc.
Daniel Lopes, Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury, Inc.
Rose Morales, Spanish Speaking Center, Inc.
Enoc Reyes, Centro de la Comunidad, Inc.
Stephanie Torres, Latino Youth Development, Inc.

Support Letters

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U.S. Senate, (Connecticut)
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U.S. Congress, House of Representatives
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U.S. Congress, House of Representatives
Former U.S. Congress, House of Representatives
State of Connecticut, House of Representatives
Former State of Connecticut, House of Representatives
State of Connecticut, House of Representatives
State of Connecticut, House of Representatives
Former State of Connecticut, House of Representatives
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission
Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association
Connecticut Association of Latin Americans in
Higher Education, Inc. (CALAHE)
State of Connecticut, Department of Education
New Haven Adult & Continuing Education
New London Adult & Continuing Education
State of Connecticut, Department of Education
State of Connecticut, Department of Labor

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