

The National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) nearly 300 community-based Affiliates work in 41 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., to meet the diverse needs of Latinos. From education and health care to homeownership counseling and workforce development, the services provided by NCLR Affiliates support millions of Hispanic Americans each year as they seek to build strong futures for their families. "Family is a value that defines Latino culture, and families are at the heart of the day-to-day work our Affiliates are engaged in," says Janet Murguía, President and CEO of NCLR. "By advancing opportunities for Latino children, families and communities, NCLR and its Affiliates together are working to strengthen America as a whole."



TIBURCIO VÁSQUEZ HEALTH CENTER, INC.

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Award-winning program: Promotores/as de Salud
Carlos Londoño, Community Health Education Director

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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2007 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

FINDING THE HARD-TO-REACH

Since 1971, Tiburcio Vásquez Health Center, Inc. (TVHC) has provided culturally and linguistically appropriate health services to low-income Latino families in southern Alameda County, Calif. TVHC is recognized as an innovative leader in empowering community members as *promotoras de salud* – health promoters – to perform outreach and education. TVHC’s *promotoras* are volunteers who go into the community to reach Latino families in marketplaces, schools, neighbors’ homes, at bus stops and at community events. “For some families, *promotoras* are the first point of contact to services,” says Carlos Londoño, Community Health Education Director at TVHC. “Our *promotoras* find the hard-to-reach and connect them to community resources so that families receive preventive care instead of waiting for an emergency.”

Most of TVHC’s *promotoras* are low-income, Spanish-speaking, stay-at-home mothers without previous health experience. But since the Promotoras de Salud program began in 1999, more than 160 women have trained in leadership development, health issues and community resources. Every year, they reach more than 3,000 community members through fairs, workshops, house visits and other activities.



OUR PHILOSOPHY IS TO TREAT THE PATIENT,
NOT SIMPLY THE DISEASE. AND FOR
LATINOS, FAMILY IS KEY. WE DO NOT JUST FOCUS
ON INDIVIDUALS. WE SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF
THE ENTIRE FAMILY THROUGH OUR
PROMOTORAS.

—Carlos Londoño, Community Health Education Director, Tiburcio Vásquez Health Center, Inc.

PROMOTORAS: AMBASSADORS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Promotoras play a key role in TVHC’s efforts to strengthen families and communities. They are grassroots vehicles for change. In six-week trainings, they learn about health concerns ranging from immunizations to heart disease prevention. They also meet with representatives from 25 partner organizations to learn about community resources such as immigration services, housing assistance and specialty health clinics. *Promotoras* frequently refer families to TVHC for affordable primary health care and help them to access further services. “Many of our families are uninsured or under-insured,” Londoño says. “But we realize that health is an essential building block for the social and economic development of our families. *Promotoras* become ambassadors to the community, increasing awareness of health issues and ensuring that families tap into our network of resources available through our community partners.”

Through training, monthly meetings and recreational activities, the health promoters also develop their own social support network. Since many are mothers, *promotoras* take turns providing child care and support for each other while volunteering. They also regularly hold fun family events and potlucks with healthy food. “Our *promotoras* become like a supportive extended family,” Londoño says. “Their dedication to health promotion shows that they care not only for the well-being of their own families but also for each other and for the greater Latino community.”

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the Families Count Family Strengthening Awards recognize NCLR Affiliates with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.