

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."



## LUZ SOCIAL SERVICES, INC.

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Award-winning program: Luz Southside Coalition  
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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

## STRIVING FOR THE SOUTHSIDE SOLUTION

In Tucson's Southside community, Latinos make up 80 percent of the population and 42 percent of Southside families live in poverty. Substance abuse, violence and lack of economic self-sufficiency are common problems. It is in this community that Luz Social Services, Inc., began the Luz Southside Coalition a decade ago to address intractable issues faced by low-income Latino families. "We responded to the community's needs," says Nastia Snider-Simon, who directs the Luz Southside Coalition. "We work to prevent or reduce violence and substance abuse through a multifaceted approach to building a safer, healthier and more supportive community."

The coalition directly serves 5,000 community members and their families each year. The Luz Southside Coalition focuses on strengthening Latino families through parenting and financial classes and health promotion. The coalition also strives to strengthen the broader Southside community by increasing family engagement and community involvement and mobilizing residents to advocate against alcohol advertising and liquor licensing.



OUR FAMILIES' LIVES ARE NOT COMPARTMENTALIZED. THE NEEDS ARE SO GREAT THAT WE TRY TO HELP TUCSON'S LATINO FAMILIES IN AS MANY WAYS AS WE CAN, WHETHER IT'S THROUGH PARENTING CLASSES, SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION OR FINANCIAL EDUCATION.

—Nastia Snider-Simon, Project Director for the Luz Southside Coalition, Luz Social Services, Inc.

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Through parenting classes, the coalition equips parents to better support their families. Culturally appropriate classes in the Barrio Families program educate parents about positive discipline, effective communication with children, drug use, teen suicide and parent-child cultural conflicts. As many as 60 parents complete the Barrio Families' 13-week curriculum each year. They then are invited to join a volunteer parents' group, Parents Against Drugs Through Recreation, Education and Service (P.A.D.R.E.S.). Through the P.A.D.R.E.S. program, parents can receive further training and become *promotoras*, promoters, in the community. Last year, P.A.D.R.E.S. members helped organize three alcohol-free cultural events that attracted 2,400 community members. These annual events strengthen the bonds among Latino community members and with the greater Southside community while celebrating Latino culture in a safe environment free of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

Through financial literacy classes, the coalition helps families build a foundation for reaching economic self-sufficiency. In the past two years, the coalition has provided financial education to more than 1,500 Latino parents and nearly 500 youth.

The coalition also connects families to community resources and empowers them to become advocates for change. Under the coalition's guidance, community members take media literacy workshops on negative advertising and attend liquor license and billboard hearings to protest the proliferation of alcohol advertising and liquor outlets. "We help parents realize that if they don't like what they see in the community, they can make a difference and create a positive environment for Southside children," Snider-Simon says.

## 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.