



# Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs

*ICHLA*

## **2005-2006 Projects and Initiatives**

### **I. "A Healthy Indiana," The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Conference on Hispanic/Latino Issues**

The ICHLA hosted the 2005 Statewide Conference on Hispanic/Latino Issues to continue a dialogue which extended beyond four years ago, bringing Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino leaders together in order to exchange information and promote cooperation and understanding. The Conference theme, "A Healthy Indiana," was centralized on providing information and resources to practitioners working with the population on a local level, and developing cultural competencies and leadership development. The Conference consisted of an opening keynote speaker and was then followed by two sessions of workshops which focused on the following areas: Education, health, media, business and economic development, and civic participation and grass roots leadership. The Conference concluded with a closing keynote speaker who delivered additional words of inspiration to all attendees, with a focus on Hispanic/Latino students. Over 250 individuals attended the Conference. The Commission plans to host its next conference in 2007 on a bi-annual basis, with an emphasis on promoting understanding between communities and raising awareness of Hispanic/Latino issues.

### **II. The Hispanic/Latino History Project**

The goal of the Hispanic/Latino History project is to educate all Hoosiers about the Hispanic/Latino population using historical information on Indiana's Hispanic/Latino history. The project, which is a collaborative effort between the Indiana State Library and the Indiana Historical Society, was initiated by the ICHLA in 2005 and currently consists of a Hispanic/Latino timeline documenting achievements for Hispanic/Latino Hoosiers and a pictorial display of various past and current Hispanic/Latino Hoosier leaders. In 2005, the project was displayed in the tunnel between the Indiana Statehouse and Government Center South. The project is under construction, with additions being made to document

Hispanic/Latino holidays, celebrations, etc., information on Indiana's Hispanic/Latino veterans and other important information on the Hispanic/Latino population. The pictorial display will eventually consist of educational brochures, an interactive segment and other information gathered will be used later for a book project documenting Indiana's Hispanic/Latino leaders and Hispanics/Latinos in Indiana History.

### **III. Opening Ceremony for Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month**

On September 15, 2005, the ICHLA made history by hosting the first Indiana State Ceremony to officially recognize September 15, 2005 – October 15, 2005 as Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month. The Latino heritage ceremony consisted of a State Proclamation reading in both English and Spanish, an ethnic dance performance and various speakers who offered words of inspiration. The Commission hosted the ceremony in order to help promote understanding regarding the Hispanic/Latino community through culture and celebration. The Commission will continue to host similar ceremonies recognizing Hispanic/Latino heritage.

### **IV. First Ever Hispanic/Latino Student and Community Legislative Day**

The ICHLA, in conjunction with the Indiana House of Representatives Page Office and Lt. Governor's Office, hosted the first ever Hispanic/Latino Student and Community Legislative Day on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The theme of this event was "Understanding State Government," and was open to 100 adults and 100 children 13 and older. All attendees were addressed by key Hispanic/Latino leaders in Indiana state government and by Lt. Governor Rebecca Skillman. In addition, students participated in a legislative mock session while adults shared their concerns and issues during a round table discussion. This important day ended with both students and adults receiving time to partake in pictures with their respective State Representatives, watching a legislative session from the gallery and taking part in the State House tour.

### **V. Public Forums**

In 2005, the ICHLA voted to begin hosting public forums around the State of Indiana. The public forums were designed to achieve 4 main objectives:

- Inform community and local government leaders about the role and goals of the ICHLA
- Receive local input on Hispanic/Latino issues surrounding education, business/economic development, driver's license, health, civil rights & housing, civic participation, media and other areas.
- Perform local Hispanic/Latino needs assessments based on public testimony
- Identify key leaders in local areas

The Commission hosted and coordinated 8 public forums in key communities throughout the state. The Commission benefited from the forums by receiving local input on issues in all areas of interest to Hispanics/Latinos, much of which is displayed in the Commission's *Report of Findings and Recommendations*.

## **VI. Sponsored Initiatives and Projects**

The ICHLA has sponsored and actively participated with organizations in the local area and throughout the state that seek to enrich the overall well-being of Indiana's Hispanic/Latino community. The following are some examples of ICHLA's sponsorships and participation:

1. The Sagamore Institute for Policy Research Policy Report, "Connecting Mexico and the Hoosier Heartland." This report was released on July 20, 2006 and is the product of a ten-month research project on the economic, labor and cultural effect of Mexican and other Latino immigration in Indiana.
2. The first ever Latino Domestic Violence Conference hosted by the State Latino Coalition Against Domestic Violence. This conference takes place in September 2006.
3. "Entérate," a statewide civic educational program that was recently created by WIIH Univisión Indiana. This program consists of a series of educational segments in Spanish that will be launched on WIIH Univisión news in the Indianapolis area and a statewide distribution of DVDs to Hispanic/Latino communities across the State.