

Pachanga in Washington County

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Washington County Extension staff organized a *Pachanga* for the Latino Community. As a FCS Agent I provided leadership for planning and implementing this event. This family “party” was planned in partnership with the Learning Center which is the Head Start provider for Washington County. The purpose of the event was to provide knowledge about educational and support programs that are offered by Extension. Part of the Learning Center programming is to provide educational programs to the parents of their children.



Flyers were designed and distributed to the Learning Center, the Latino Market, and several workplaces that have large numbers of Latino employees. The event was scheduled in a community park, close to a community which has a large Latino population. The community at-large was also invited and flyers were placed around the town of St. George.



Food was purchased from the Latino Market. This provided a great networking opportunity and created awareness on the part of the employees of who we are and what we do. Also, the food was provided by the market at a discount and we enjoyed learning about the foods sold in the market and how they are prepared. We purchased meat, chips, tortillas, sweet breads, fruit and candy from the market. The market also provided a wonderful piñata’s at a reasonable cost.

The Latino population in Washington County has risen to 15% of the total population. There has been a need for our Extension staff to network and provide services to this growing population. I needed a way to reach this population and networking with the Learning Center gave me a great avenue to introduce our organization to the Latino community. I was apprehensive about the support that I would get from the community. I had expected that 20-30 members of the Latino community would attend. The response of over 50 Latino people and others from the local 4-H program, the Learning Center and

the community at-large was more than I anticipated. It was a great beginning for developing a relationship with this growing population



There were several things that made this a successful event. First, we received a \$500 diversity grant which created an incentive to sponsor the event. Partnering with the Learning Center was important in that the director introduced me to the potential participant and took me to the housing areas to deliver invitations. The Learning Center staff's involvement facilitated participation from members of the Latino community. The Learning Center is viewed as a trusted service organization.

Bringing the *Parching* to the community where people lived was important. Many families could walk to the park and we were in their community. Lastly, support from my County Extension staff was the most critical factor in the success of the program. Staff members were willing to attend the event and provide programs and materials. The staff are willing to provide additional programming to this population in the future.



Successfully replicating this event in another county might involve finding a Latino community organization with which to partner. It would also be useful to become acquainted with a place where members of the Latino population shop and frequent where the event could be advertised. It is also important to have any materials to be distributed translated into Spanish. Materials and information about money management, family relations, nutrition, diabetes, horticulture and youth programs were available in Spanish. Translating materials may require hiring someone to do the translating of program materials. It is also helpful to know a few words of Spanish in order to communicate on a very elementary level. This site was helpful to me: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/languages/Spanishdictionary.html>

The best advice regarding planning and implement a *Pachanga*, is to just do it! I was so impressed with the appreciation express by the Latino people for the information, the food and the family activities. They also expressed their appreciation by helping clean up after the event.