

USU Extension Professor Raising Mental Health Awareness, Invited to National Meeting

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USU EXTENSION ASSISTANT PROFESSOR RAISING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS, INVITED TO NATIONAL MEETING

A Utah State University Extension assistant professor and two teen council members recently attended the Well Being Legacy Convening, an exclusive gathering of top national, regional and community leaders who are working to improve their communities and produce life-changing



results.

USU Extension Assistant Professor Zuri Garcia has been working to increase mental health awareness among the Latino community in Clearfield and surrounding cities by organizing a Latino Advisory Council to guide efforts to connect the Latino community to mental health services and programs taking place in Davis County. The advisory committee is made up of both adult and youth representatives, including teens Aubrianna Soifua and Martin Farfan, who accompanied Garcia to the Well Being Legacy Convening in Oakland, Calif.

The goals of the council include increasing Latino participation in Davis County mental health educational programs, creating resource materials to raise awareness about mental health and mental health services and holding monthly meetings that create a safe environment for youth and adults to dialogue about mental health, among many others.

"Davis County is a leader in collaborating across agencies and organizations to address the high suicide rate through our mental health education and a number of other initiatives," Garcia said. "We want to ensure that these programs are known about and accessible in the Latino

community. The Latino Advisory Council is essential for us to be culturally appropriate in our efforts."

This work has been made possible by the Well Connected Communities Grant.

During the Well Being Legacy Convening, the team learned from other community leaders, contributed to the discussion about community improvement and participated in an interactive panel. Only the top 25 well-being programs in the nation were invited to attend.

"It was an honor to be among the nation's health and well-being leaders and among other communities that are doing similar work in both urban and rural areas," Garcia said. "Our youth represented Davis County, Utah well; their contribution was valued by all in attendance."

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