

# Know Your Rights: Education Program for Latino Immigrants

## Project Overview

Immigration in Northfield has been a major component of the city's history since the 1980s. During that time Latinos began to come to Northfield in search of employment opportunities as a result of a farm crisis that left them jobless. This influx of immigrants raised the population of Latinos to 5.7% in 2000, up from only 0.02% in 1980. Unfortunately, with this quick increase in population, there were insufficient resources to meet the needs of the incoming community members. As a result, there is now a gap that needs to be filled. Our work aims to reduce this gap. We have primarily focused on the issues surrounding the discrimination of police towards the Latino population in Northfield. These issues include racial profiling, deportation due to minor issues such as not wearing a seat belt, a lack of separation of issues such as state laws concerning wearing a seat belt and federal immigration status, and the reluctance to report crimes due to fear of police officers taking issues like immigration status to higher levels of government even if it is unrelated to the crime being reported. This project will work towards a better relationship between Latinos and reduce the fear that they currently experience with the local police department as a result of police enforcement practices.

## Project Contacts

| Name                                 | Title/services  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| •Janet Lewis Muth                    | Growing Up Healthy  |
| •Marj Evans-De-Carpio                | Prior employer of Northfield, serviced Latino population  |
| •Mark Taylor                         | Chief of Police for Northfield  |
| •Father Dennis Dempsey               | Priest at Saint Dominic's Catholic Church   |
| •Richard Cook                        | Current Northfield Sheriff  |
| •Ben Casper                          | Immigration lawyer - Law Society Director of ILCM's Pro Bono Litigation Project                   |
| •Civil Society                       | legal services, court advocacy, legal council, multilingual (Spanish, Hmong, Somali, and English) |
| •Southern MN Regional Legal Services | legal services, specialize in immigrant legal services  |
| •Immigrant Law Center of MN          | legal representation for immigrants   |
| •Advocates for Human Rights          | pro bono work for immigrants seeking asylum status  |

## Relevant Organizations

**Growing Up Healthy (GUH):**  
GUH seeks to increase the level of community connectedness experienced by marginalized families in Rice Co. with children under the age of 5 through the three interrelated areas of the work of its **Neighborhood Leaders**, increased community education and awareness about the social determinants of health, and systems change

**HealthFinders Collaborative:**  
The mission of HealthFinders is to provide quality, accessible and culturally sensitive healthcare services at no cost, to low-income and uninsured residents of greater Rice County.

**Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota:**  
Our mission is to provide quality immigration legal services, law-related education, and advocacy to meet the steadily increasing needs of Minnesota's immigrant and refugee communities.

**American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU):**  
The ACLU works to extend rights (1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights, equal protection under the law, due process, privacy) to segments of our population that have traditionally been denied their rights.

## Relevant Resources

### MN Statewide Racial Profiling Report (2003)

The study consistently found in all participating jurisdictions that law enforcement officers stopped Black, Latino, and American Indian drivers at greater rates than White drivers, searched Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians at greater rates than White drivers, and found contraband as a result of searches of Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians at lower rates than in searches of White drivers. Conversely, law enforcement officers stopped and searched White drivers at lower rates than drivers of color and found contraband in searches of White drivers at a greater rate than in searches of drivers of color.

### MN Statute 626.8471: Avoiding Racial Profiling: Policies and Learning Objectives

The legislature finds that the reality or public perception of racial profiling alienates people from police, hinders community policing efforts, and causes law enforcement to lose credibility and trust among the people law enforcement is sworn to protect and serve. No stop initiated by an officer should be made without a legitimate reason; race, ethnicity, or national origin alone should never provide a sufficient reason. Law enforcement policies and training programs must emphasize the need to respect the balance between the rights of all persons to be free from unreasonable governmental intrusions and law enforcement's need to enforce the law.

## Interviews

**Marj Evans-De-Carpio:** Our meeting with Marj was very helpful and set the pave for our work in this project. She informed us of the work that she previously did when she worked for the city of Northfield and detailed the resources that were lacking for the Latino community. It was evident that she was very passionate about her work and invested in the fate of the Latino community. Her services included translation and assistance to the Latino community members to fill out paperwork and adjust to life in Northfield.

**Richard Cook:** Our meeting with Sheriff Cook was very helpful and allowed us to better understand that relationship that exists between the police department and the members of the Latino population at large. He was very adamant that the sheriffs practice impartial policing and specifically are trained to avoid racial profiling. His moto is "live and let live" when dealing with members of the Latino community.

**Ben Casper:** He focused more on the legislative side of immigration and the politics associated with that. He enlightened us about the future of immigration law and the necessary logistical aspects of dealing with immigration. He greatly approved of the ACLU brochure.

## Future Directions

- Have speakers from Immigrant Law Center of MN give education presentations on immigration and deportation policy
- Pay attention to the incoming legislation in Minnesota that pertains to immigration. Ben Casper envisions an Arizona type immigration policy possibly being enacted by a new Republic legislature.
- Focus on other components of immigrant life and develop resources to meet those needs.

Ideals to Action, Fall 2010

Colin Martin & Megan Gnazzo

Partnership with Growing Up Healthy