



News Release

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AT&T, HISPANIC HERITAGE FOUNDATION, AND ASCA LAUNCH MiMENTORS PROGRAM TO INCREASE LATINO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE AND COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

*National Research Center for College and University Admissions Announces
Findings of Latinos' Greater Need for Guidance in Education*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – AT&T and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (HHF), in partnership with the American School Counselors Association (ASCA), today launched the MiMentors program to raise the Latino high school graduation and college attendance rates by supporting high school guidance counselors. (The rate of students vs. guidance counselors in California is more than 900 to one and is even more dramatic in Latino-populated regions.) The issue has not been a major focus of policymakers in closing the achievement gap for Latinos although research by the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA) found Latinos to have a greater need for guidance in education.

"AT&T is very proud to partner with HHF and ASCA on the Mi Mentor's program. This program, which takes an innovated approach on mentoring to help Latino students prepare for entrance into college compliments our Aspire program, focused on high school success and workforce readiness," said Susan Santana, Assistant Vice President, External Affairs for AT&T. "Both Aspire and the Mi Mentors program support the good work of the education community in helping students see the connection between school and their future careers, leading to life success."

MiMentors was designed to meet the unique needs of Latino high school students, socially, academically and culturally, in the hopes of providing an educational vision. The program targets students with demonstrated, yet un-reached potential, students in need of additional academic support and those reaching out for assistance while traversing the labyrinth of college preparation and application. The Mentors are currently enrolled college students selected from HHF's network of vetted and overachieving young leaders who have been honored with HHF's prestigious Youth Awards. The Mentors receive educational grants in exchange for participating in the program. ASCA will work with HHF to

train, place and supervise the Mentors. The program is set to expand in the fall of 2009 and is currently being piloted in San Jose, Houston, New York, Miami and Greater Washington, DC.

“Through MiMentors, we wanted to focus on an area that has not been highlighted in the ongoing dialog concerning the dismal high school graduation rate for Latinos,” said Antonio Tijerino, president and CEO of HHF. “America needs a more educated workforce and in light of the burgeoning Latino community, we must invest in raising the graduation rate of our nation’s youngest population segment. Through MiMentors, a greater number of students will be directly and positively engaged while providing some needed relief to overwhelmed guidance counselors. I applaud the vision and commitment of AT&T in moving us forward with this important initiative.”

The launch of MiMentors featured a panel discussion on Capitol Hill consisting of policy-makers, Latino-serving and educational organizations, and one of the participating college students who is serving as Mentor and overseeing the pilot program, Eutiquio Chapa.

To more effectively identify and meet the unique needs of Latino students, HHF partnered with NRCCUA to survey 10,000 high school students and found:

- Students “wanting” and “expecting” to attend college was nearly identical across ethnic groups; however, the Latino population has the lowest high school graduation and college attendance rate.
- Latino high school students were found to have the greatest need for guidance in education outside of the home, which is juxtaposed with them being least likely to have a parent who graduated from high school or went to college.
- Among African American, Latino and Asian students, Latinos were least likely to feel encouraged to go to college by those around them and most likely to feel discouraged from going to college.
- Latino students were the least likely to be engaged in discussions surrounding college or education and most likely to get information from advertising.

The MiMentors program features weekly group sessions called *Charlas*. Run by the Mentors, they engage the students on various topics designed to provide a four-year-path to graduating from high school and attending college. In an effort to facilitate this safe space, Mentors will utilize the help of participating counselors, to select students based on both their potential for growth and their needs. Students will be freshman in high school and the MiMentors program will be focused on sustainability including a model for the students who participated in the program being positioned to lead the *Charlas* as sophomores with the incoming class of Latino high school students.

The current pilot of the MiMentors program will function as an opportunity for

coordinators, mentors and counselors to fine-tune and improve the program for expansion in the fall of 2009. The most important aspect of the pilot program is to measure the program's success and identify areas for improvement. HHF has developed various metrics including Periodic surveys to be completed by counselors, teachers, Mentors, students and even parents (when appropriate) to identify improvement in the students':

- Attendance rates
- Observed class participation
- Grades
- Extra-curricular involvement
- Basic positive engagement

In addition, for more in-depth evaluation, post session discussions will be held with coordinators, teachers and Mentors to review the *Charlas* and students' progress

The MiMentors program is one of several AT&T has partnered with, as part of its new educational initiative, AT&T Aspire.

"In 2008, AT&T announced the largest education initiative in company history - AT&T Aspire - a \$100 million commitment focused on high school success and workforce readiness. AT&T Aspire supports the great work of educators, whose passion and commitment helps students succeed each and every day. Aspire also includes a job-shadowing program involving 400,000 employee hours for 100,000 students throughout five years, giving those students a chance to see firsthand the types of job skills they will need to be successful in the future," said Susan Santana, Assistant Vice President, External Affairs for AT&T.

About the Hispanic Heritage Foundation

The Hispanic Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit organization which identifies, inspires, promotes, and prepares Latino leaders through educational, cultural and workforce programs. For more information, please visit www.HispanicHeritage.org or for an introduction to HHF's mission visit www.HHFvideo.com.

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