

March 13, 2012



INSPIRE CHANGE FOR GOOD

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of Families in Schools and the *Abriendo Puertas*/Opening Doors program. I am the Senior Programs Manager at Good Samaritan Family Resource Center, a community based organization that works directly with recently arrived Latino immigrants, providing them with resources and support so that they can become self-sufficient and active participants in society.

In 2010, Good Samaritan was approached by one of our key funders, First 5 San Francisco, to explore the possibility of offering the *Abriendo Puertas* curriculum at our site. I was the first person from our agency that was trained in the curriculum by Families in Schools' staff that year and I was very impressed with the quality of the materials and its relevance of the issues faced by the families we serve on a daily basis. As a program created by Latinos for Latinos, this curriculum addresses critical topics that support school readiness and family empowerment, is evidence based, and has proven to be a perfect fit for our agency and our mission.

In the past year, we have offered the 10-week series twice and have received positive feedback from participants who have shared that the program has changed their lives. 100% of participants surveyed at the end of the last program cycle reported that they benefitted from taking *Abriendo Puertas* and 90% reported that they have a better understanding of what their children need to succeed in school.

We are enthusiastic to continue offering *Abriendo Puertas* at Good Samaritan Family Resource Center and look forward to our continued collaboration with Families in Schools.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at auraaparicio@goodsamfrc.org or 415-401-4240.

Sincerely,

Aura Aparicio
Senior Programs Manager

Our mission is to help immigrant families access needed services, develop self-sufficiency, and participate fully as members of the community.

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16 March 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

Those of us responsible for providing high quality parenting education support throughout the service areas of the Oregon Child Development Coalition Head Start programs, whose families are 95% Latino, find the *Abriendo Puertas /Opening Doors* curriculum an invaluable tool for our communities. Families are best served when parents' cultures and ways of knowing are respected. A strong feature of the *Abriendo Puertas/ Opening Doors* curriculum is that it grew out of needs in a community and was developed by that community.

The curriculum addresses the parent's role as the first and primary teacher and advocate for their child in a strengths-based manner, relying on cultural understanding and parents' growing awareness of their capacities to have a positive influence on their children. It supports the research that indicates that telling stories and sharing cultural traditions with children in any language help prepare the children to do well in school, even when the language is not English, and even when this is done orally rather than through print.

The methods of *popular education* which address what's important to parents, families and communities include dialogue as a key tool. *Abriendo Puertas* trainers do not act as experts transferring information or skills to learners, but rather trusted facilitators, who allow for an exchange among peers. Participants can share their experiences in order to gain a critical understanding of their social nature, leading them to experience transformative learning and appropriate new ways to deal with the constant changes and challenges of their daily lives. Parents coming together for such sessions are building social capital by engaging in meaningful and trusting relationships. These experiences foster increased self-confidence leading to positive learning experiences, self-efficacy (which may be a genuinely new experience for many parents, especially women), enhanced learner identity, greater independence and outgoingness.

The structure is adaptable so it can be used in short-term Migrant programs as well as in Migrant and Seasonal and Oregon Pre-K programs. Parents can still come away with a lot of information and behavior-changing experience even if they cannot attend all sessions. It is well organized and constructed with deep understanding of both parenting education and the needs of Latinos. We are just beginning to implement groups in areas around the state.

Sincerely,

Carol Mazer
Special Programs Manager
Oregon Child Development Coalition

CULTIVATING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

*Partnering with Communities for the Growth
and Independence of Family*

CULTIVANDO EL FUTURO DE NUESTROS NIÑOS

*Colaborando con Comunidades para el Crecimiento
e Independencia de la Familia*