ReachOut e-Diversity News

An Electronic Publication of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council

This Month: Hispanic Heritage Month

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October 2020 Edition | Volume 15 Issue 5

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Don't Miss an Issue!

It is the policy of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council to use person-first language in items written by staff. Items reprinted or quoted exactly as they originally appear may not reflect this policy.

Reach Out e-Diversity Newsletter joins the country in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.

In this edition, there is an overview of the history and importance of this celebration. At the end of this article, you are invited to watch a video that highlights contributions Hispanic Americans have made to our country.

Additional articles provide information about the issues and challenges facing Latinos with disabilities. An online toolkit for Latina mothers and caregivers of school-age children with disabilities is provided.

At the end of each article, you are invited to SHARE on ODDC social media platforms. Assist us in increasing awareness of the needs, issues, and challenges impacting Hispanic and Latinx people with disabilities.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes and celebrates the contributions Americans tracing their roots to Spain, Mexico, Central America, South American and the Spanish-speaking nations of the Caribbean have made to American society and culture.

The observance was born in 1968 when Congress authorized the president to issue an annual proclamation designating National Hispanic Heritage Week. Just two decades later, lawmakers expanded it to a monthlong celebration, stretching from September 15 to October 15.

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Disability in the Latino Community

By M P Garcia

Bilingual Information/Media Specialist
National Rehabilitation Information Center

The views within the Latino community on disability are very similar across Latino groups. However, these views cannot be bundled together for the whole community. The views, perceptions, and approach to disability by the Latino community and by Latino individuals or families vary depending on many factors which include socio-economic status, country of origin, and living situation (urban vs. rural living). Just like in many other cultures, Latinos may hide a family member with a disability, will not ask for help, and will rearrange their lives so that the family member with a disability is taken care of.

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Advocating for Workplace Inclusion of Hispanic and Latinx People with Disabilities

The Disability Statistics Compendium, released by Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire, shows that in the economic expansion prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, just 39.4 percent of working-age Latinx people with disabilities had jobs, compared to 76 percent of Latinx people without disabilities. In total, out of 2,915,754 working-age Latinx people with disabilities, only 1,149,092 had jobs pre-pandemic.

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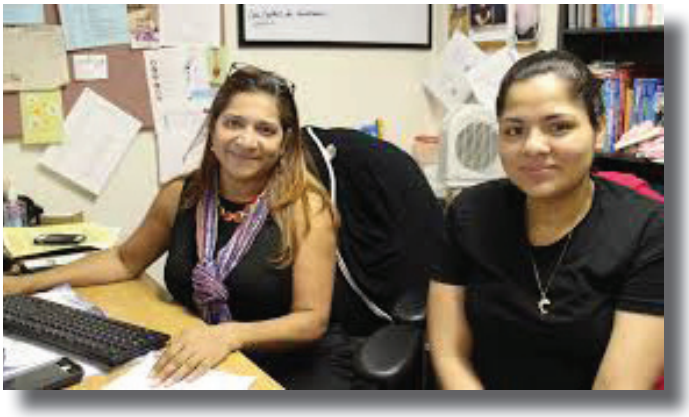

Resources for Latina mothers and other caregivers of school-age children with disabilities

"Latinas with disabilities deserve to be in every conversation about diversity, equity, opportunity and justice. They deserve to have an education and jobs, just like anyone else." - Stephanie Farfan

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The timing is key. Hispanic Heritage Month starts on September 15, a historically significant day that marks the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The designated period also recognizes those from Mexico, Chile, and Belize which celebrate their independence on Sept. 16, Sept. 18, and Sept. 21, respectively.

Did You Know?

The Hispanic population of the United States as of July 1, 2019 was 60.6 million, making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or racial minority. Hispanics constituted 18.5% of the nation's total population.

There are 5.2 million Hispanic and Latinx people with disabilities living in the U.S.

The share of U.S. Hispanics with college experience has increased since 2010. About 41% of U.S. Hispanic adults ages 25 and older had at least some college experience in 2018, up from 36% in 2010. The share who have a bachelor's degree or more education also increased during this period, from 13% to 17%.

The share of Latinos in the U.S. who speak English proficiently is growing. In 2018, 71% of Latinos ages 5 and older spoke English proficiently, up from 59% in 2000. U.S.-born Latinos are driving this growth, as their share on this measure has grown from 81% to 90% during this time. By comparison, 37% of Latino *immigrants* spoke English proficiently in 2018, a percentage that has increased only slightly since 1980.

People of Mexican origin account for slightly over 60% (37 million) of the nation's overall Hispanic population as of 2018. Those of Puerto Rican origin are the next largest group, at 5.8 million (another 3.2 million live on the island); their numbers have been growing partly due to an increase in net migration from Puerto Rico to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Six other Hispanic origin groups in the U.S. have roughly 1 million or more people each: Cubans, Salvadorans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Colombians and Hondurans.

WATCH this VIDEO and learn more about the contributions that Hispanic Americans have made to our country

Hispanic Heritage CELEBRATION

Join in celebrating Hispanic Heritage!

SHARE your celebrations on ODDC social media platforms

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With all this in mind, what happens to Latinos with disabilities within the US is dependent on many variables including acculturation, English proficiency, where they live, stereotypes, and low expectations – along with the aforementioned cultural views on disability. “As a Latina who is blind, I have first-person experience with the low expectations and assumptions of the majority culture,” states Proyecto Visión project director Kathy Martinez. “I have seen many disabled Latinos live down to these diminished expectations. They become overwhelmed by isolation, are disconnected from the service delivery system and don’t have disabled Latino professionals to look up to or network with. Unfortunately, even those who do access resources often are not receiving appropriate service.”

Within the US, the Latino disability community faces many barriers in finding services or programs that help. These barriers include language, networking, collaboration, advocacy, and communication. For example, differences in language may be a source of embarrassment for some Latinos with disabilities and this can act as a disincentive to participate. Others may be afraid that they will compromise their legal status if they apply for government services. Immigrants may not be accustom to advocating for their rights. They also may not be comfortable with the aggressive navigation that is needed to gain access to opportunities.

To help the Latino disability community within the US, outreach and education programs are imperative that can provide information to families in reference to programs and opportunities available to them. Agencies need to include bilingual/bicultural professionals and it is important that these agencies and programs are in touch with the norms and cultural values of the population being served. Improving vocational rehabilitation services for Latinos may include encouraging multiple interpretation of independent living and definitions of success; reducing processes that may be disincentives; and making the system easier for Latino jobseekers with disabilities by hiring bilingual/bicultural job developers who can serve as peer role models.

Join in celebrating Hispanic Heritage!

SHARE a barrier or issue that you would like the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council address.

The purpose of "Reach Out" e-Diversity newsletter is to promote interagency collaboration and coordination that result in agencies providing culturally competent services to the unserved/underserved populations in Ohio

Reach Out e-Diversity News is produced by The Outcomes Management Group, Ltd.

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Just 39.4 Percent of Working-Age Hispanic and Latinx People with Disabilities Are Employed

Jaime Pacheco-Orozco is actively working to change these statistics. Speaking during the "Leadership: Making a Difference for the Future" panel for RespectAbility's ADA30 Summit in July 2020, he shared that he strongly believes that the onus should be on public entities to serve all their constituents as fully as possible: "Oftentimes the onus is placed upon the constituency to learn to self-advocate. What I think we need to be able to do is to work within our own systems to teach our folks to be receptive to listen to others. … I think it's incumbent upon public entities to make a concerted effort to educate their staff on how to listen and respond to the needs of people with disabilities."

He later added that disability inclusion within these entities will help to progress this goal. "I really think it's critically important not so much for people with disabilities to engage the public entities but really about public entities making a concerted effort to ensure that their leadership, that their departments, are filled with people with disabilities," he said. "It should not be the department of disability that has the employees with disabilities, it should be every single department."

In sharing his journey of disability advocacy, Pacheco-Orozco explained, "As we say in the disability community, "nothing about us without us." That is why, as my mentors told me many times, I believe we each have an obligation to advocate for others particularly if we're able to be a voice for them. And that really is how I came to be involved in public service."

Vincenzo Piscopo knows the importance of shaping workplace inclusion through philanthropic involvement. During his twenty-five year tenure at The Coca-Cola Company, he has served in several different areas of the organization: Finance, IT, Marketing and Innovation. As the Community and Stakeholder Relations Director for Coca-Cola, Piscopo manages company relationships with disability, veteran and Hispanic organizations and advocates for these communities internally. In addition to his primary job role, he is also the founder of the This-Ability Business Resource Group (BRG).

Born and raised in Venezuela, Piscopo received a bachelor's degree in Economics, an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University and a master's in Creativity from Buffalo State University. Piscopo, now a wheelchair-user, became paralyzed from a popped herniated disk in 2010, and has said that he quickly fell in love with being part of the disability community. He serves as the president and founder of the "Wheels of Happiness Foundation," where he uses his expertise to help people with motor disabilities in disadvantaged areas of the world.

While serving on the panel "The Private Sector and the Future of Work for People with Disabilities" for RespectAbility's ADA30 Summit in July 2020, Piscopo spoke about disability employment, especially during the time of COVID-19, sharing that one benefit has been the equalization brought about by work-from-home: "We're not worried about accommodations for people with disabilities, we are worried about accommodations, period." He added that this has led to organizations recognizing the relevance and value of accommodations and hopes that this understanding will make this process easier in the future, as well as increase disability employment.

> "People with disabilities really don't need your charity: people with disabilities need opportunities, and once you give them opportunities, they can add value to you, to society, to organizations and all that," he stated. "Having people with disabilities in the workforce is not just a nice thing to do, but actually a very smart thing to do."

Along with his focus on people with disabilities in the workplace, Piscopo also advocates for Hispanic and Latinx individuals within The Coca-Cola Company. Discussing being at and working at the intersection of these two identities, he said, "[with] the evolution of corporate responsibility and social justice and all of that, all those groups working together can actually create synergies that make them as a group more powerful."

Consider these networking strategies to improve workplace inclusion.

- Participating in business-to-business groups focused on disability employment, such as a state or local Disability:IN affiliate, the National Business and Disability Council (NBDC) or the National Organization on Disability's (NOD) Corporate Leadership Council.
- Join employer-focused groups, such as state or local Chambers of Commerce or human resources (HR) organizations (such as Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) chapters, Industry Liaison Groups or D&I organizations) or service organizations (such as Rotary, Kiwanis or Lions).
- Work with workforce development boards.
- For service providers not specifically focused on people with disabilities, reach out to Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to discuss ways to collaborate to better serve people with disabilities both during pre-employment and once on the job.
- For service providers not specifically focused on employment, contact local American Job Centers (AJCs), which are located in communities throughout the country and offer centralized employment and training services to help people both with and without disabilities prepare for and obtain employment. Services for people with disabilities may be coordinated through "Disability Resource Coordinates" located in some AJCs.
- Connect with the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), a free service of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy that offers a variety of resources, including online trainings, to help employers recruit, hire, retain and advance people with disabilities.
- Contact Diversity Partners, which offers online toolboxes for leadership and frontline staff, supported by on-demand technical assistance and training. Diversity Partners can also be contacted via phone at 1-888-296-3202 (voice) or 607-255-2891 (TTY)

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SHARE on ODDC social media platforms how you advocated for inclusion.

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Many Latinx students with a disability are unequipped with the tools they need to succeed in school. And often family members are unfamiliar with the best practices to help them fully thrive. Statistics illustrate the negative affects lacking support can have on students and their families not just in school but later in the job market as well.

Latinx students with disabilities account for 12 percent of all students being served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Nearly half (42 percent) of Latinx students with disabilities are receiving services for a specific learning disability. In total there are 1,586,009 Latinx students with disabilities enrolled in our nation's public schools:

- 736,053 Latinx students with specific learning disabilities
- 278,568 Latinx students with Speech or language impairments
- 128,023 Latinx students with Autism
- 104,387 Latinx students with intellectual disabilities
- 57,891 Latinx students with emotional disturbances
- 28,946 Latinx students with developmental delays
- 20,403 Latinx students with hearing impairments
- 10,469 Latinx students with Orthopedic impairments
- 6,141 Latinx students with visual impairments
- 4,851 Latinx students with traumatic brain injuries
- 320 Latinx students with Deaf-blindness

Many Latinx students do not get the disability diagnosis and accommodations they need to succeed in school. Even if they do, their parents and other family members do not know best practices that can help these children fully thrive. Data shows that English-language-learners (ELL) with disabilities who do not receive proper support can get frustrated in class, act up and get suspended. Evidence also shows that suspensions can cause students to fall even

further behind in school which correlates to a higher likelihood of dropping out of school.

It is estimated that 59% Latinx students with a disability graduate high school with a degree compared to 78.2% of Latinx students without a disability.

Note: These are 2018 data provided by Victor Pineda, et.al.

The responsibility of caregiving for a disabled family member falls disproportionately on women; 20 percent of all female workers in the United States are family caregivers. The "average" U.S. caregiver spends nearly 20 hours per week, the equivalent of another part-time job, providing unpaid care for nearly five years. Of course, informal (family) caregiving is not paid and puts the entire family in jeopardy of poverty. Latinas are disproportionally involved in the caregiving industry, as well as taking care of their own loved ones as a family role.

Victor Pineda (President of World Enabled and Global Alliance for Accessible Technology Environments), Edith Espiritu (Parent Coordinator and Outreach for Fiesta Educativa), Stephani Farfan (Policy, Practices and Latinx Outreach Associate, RespectAbility), and Vergara Acevedo (Co-Chair, Spanish Language Committee, Respectability) co-authored a resource guide for Latina mothers and other caregivers of school-age children with disabilities.

> "Our goal is to help address the critical need for information, guidance, and support for parents in the Latinx community who may have a child with a disability. As an immigrant parent, I want to inspire other parents to support their children and set high expectations for their community. Doing so will strengthen our community as a whole and elevate our collective potential." Victor Pineda

respect ability
FIGHTING STIGMAS. ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES.

Click here to download the Resource Guide

Hispanic Heritage CELEBRATION

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SHARE

SHARE your found resources on ODDC social media platforms