

Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, Inc.

Hispanics United of Buffalo
254 Virginia Street
Buffalo, New York 14201
(716) 856-7110
(716) 856-9617 FAX

Good Morning, My Name is Juan Torres and I am the Director of Health and Preventive Services for Hispanics United of Buffalo.

The agency is dedicated to improving the lives of the Hispanic Community through providing effective services. During 2006, we provided 26,000 people with essential services.

Services include:

- A food Pantry that can be accessed on a monthly basis
- Domestic Violence program for victims providing Case management, advocacy, parenting skills, anger management, navigation of the legal system, shelter and housing placement, and interpretation and translation.
- Youth Services: Youth Court Advocacy as an alternative to incarceration, job readiness training, job placement, tutoring, mentoring, after school program, anger management, and educational placement.
- Senior Services: daily enrichment program, transportation, nutrition program.
- Family Support: providing case management services that prevent the involvement of Child Protective Services and the placement of children into the foster care system.
- Housing: emergency assistance with rent and utilities, transitional housing for victims of domestic violence, and housing placement and location.

The agency has found the need of other essential services, not currently funded through our agency, which include:

- An employment training program for Latino adults, especially those that are limited English speakers. This would include job readiness training and job placement location and placement.
- Our senior citizens are in need of a case manager, to arrange and coordinate their medical appointments, ensure that applications and renewals for eligible services are completed, provide follow up services, and monitor a senior's wellbeing.
- An HIV program designed to educate our community and help those that are HIV positive learn how to protect them selves and others.
- A domestic violence shelter designed for the Latina victim. Many of our clients state that in the local shelters they feel isolated and even more alone that when they were with their batterers, because they are not English proficient and are not with other Latinas.



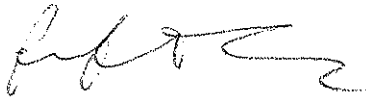
United Way
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Providing Services To Our Community

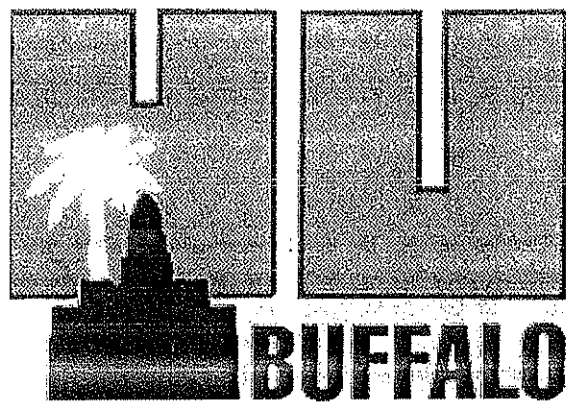
In conclusion: What would become of the Hispanic community in Buffalo and throughout Western New York if families were destroyed, if seniors were ill, if a spouse continued to hit their partner? Strong communities are based on strong families. How can we ensure that this community stays strong? We do this everyday by providing the education, skills, and services that our families need in order to maintain strong, stable, safe families. I hope that NYS appreciates the fact that there is a Latino community in Buffalo and Erie County, we can not be overlooked. We are not only in need of the current support we receive; we are in need of other essential services.

Thank you for your time and for the anticipated support NYS will provide for the Latino Community in Buffalo and Western New York.

Respectfully Submitted on 11/17/07:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juan Torres', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Juan Jesus Torres, MPH, CHES
Director of Health and Preventive Services



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Transitional Housing Program

We are here today from Hispanics United of Buffalo Transitional Housing Program to request an Increase of funds due to the demand of this program.

This program is designed to assist 11 homeless women with children, who find themselves in domestic violence situations, living in shelters, and have lost everything.

We assist them with housing, furniture, clothing, supportive services, and education to make them stable and empower them to maintain themselves along with their families upon completion of this program.

With increased funding the following goals can be reached:

1. **To house 11 more clients** due to the demand and enhance the program which currently assists eleven clients during a two year period.
2. **Develop transitional housing for the young (18-25) Latino male population with children.**
3. **Enhance our supportive services** which include Parenting Classes, Case Management, Interpretation/Translation, Employment Training and Placement, 1st month rent upon graduation, furniture and moving expenses.
4. **Six month follow-up program** to ensure stability is maintained through monthly monitoring and provide direct service as needed.
5. **Program rewards to lessen participant hardships-** due to lack of money for transportation, basic household items. These rewards will be provided as action plan steps are met and/or participants show initiative in improving their self sufficiency.

Success Story's

Our latest success story in our Transitional Housing Department Was a client that came in with domestic violence issues, living in a shelter with her son and had lost everything.

Our Domestic Violence Department in-house referred her to our Transitional Housing Department and in a matter of 15 days we were able to move her into one of our apartments with appliances with electric and gas

During that period of time she attended Parenting workshops in which she received a certificate and while she was on the waiting list, she provided us with the necessary documents to process her application.

Our client is currently living in the apartment and child is able to go to school close by, and still client is in need of household items as stated by the child, he would like a TV.

We have provided this client with a referral for furniture, clothing, household items and our food pantry at Hispanics United

She is now attending our workshops in which all 11 clients working together on a new project to raise funds by making necklace, earrings and so fourth

Mrs. Pomales is the Transitional Housing Workshop Trainer



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November 17, 2007
Comment on the NYS State Budget

Hello, my name is Norma Gonzalez. I provide Domestic Violence Case Management Services to Latina victims throughout the City of Buffalo and Erie County. Services provided include, but are not limited to: Advocacy; Navigation thru the court system and the Department of Social Services; shelter placement; housing placement; interpretation & translation and safety planning.

I would like to see Hispanics United of Buffalo be able to provide a more sufficient housing program for Latina victims in our community. Latina victims do not have any where to turn that makes them feel safe or comfortable within their own culture. Clients have expressed feelings of isolation and loneliness when placed in the local shelters, especially since they are not able to communicate with other residents or shelter staff. This is tormenting and traumatizing to a victim that has recently escaped from the hands of her abuser.

I am now going to have one my clients speak about what we have provided for her through our program.

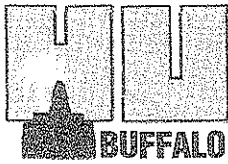
Respectfully submitted,

Norma Gonzalez
Domestic Violence Case Manager



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11/16/07

I want to thank you for this opportunity in allowing me to speak to you about the youth services provide by Hispanics United of Buffalo.

The youth services that we currently offer are as follows:

- Court Advocacy / Alternatives to incarceration
- Educational placement and referral
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Vocational Training
- Employment preparation and job placement assistance
- After school program for 13 – 18 years of age
- Youth anger management classes

Hispanics United of Buffalo has a long and successful history of providing services to our youth in need but so much more needs to be done. The high dropout rate among our youth is at an all time high especially among males, school violence and the criminal activity of our youth is also alarming, we must reach our youth before we get to this point, but we cannot do it without funding and resources. It is imperative that you hear the cries of the parents that want help for their sons and daughters.

Help us in helping them, by providing us with the necessary funding and resources we need to continue our work.

Thank You,

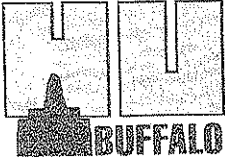
Pedro Velez-Lopez
Youth Court Advocate

Gabriel A. Gauthier
Youth Development & Empowerment Specialist



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Comment on the NYS State Budget

The Comprehensive Family Support Services Program assists families that are at-risk of having their children placed in the foster care system. Each worker in the program is entrusted with the responsibility of providing case management services that will prevent the involvement of Child Protective Services. Families are provided the skills and tools in order make them self-sufficient empowering them to engage both the educational and social services system, and the knowledge needed to provide a safe and stable family environment.

Currently our clients are monolingual Spanish speakers, living under the poverty level, and the majority of the parents have not graduated from High School. These factors, in addition to the issues that the children are facing (emotional, behavioral, educational difficulties) comprise the family unit that makes up the clientele of the Comprehensive Family Support Services Program.

This program becomes the only way that these families are able to begin the process of resolving their issues and to maintain their families together. A community is based upon the families in that community. What would become of the Hispanic Community on the West Side of Buffalo and throughout Erie County if Latino families are destroyed? Strong communities are built on strong families. At Hispanics United of Buffalo, Inc, we provide the skills and tools that families need in order to foster stable families.

I hope that the state will appreciate the fact that there is a Latino community in Buffalo and Erie County. We are in need of continued services and the development of other essential programs. Our families are in need of employment services, which include: job readiness training designed for adults that speak only Spanish, job placement assistance and on-site English Language Development course.

Thank you for your time and I hope that the NYS budget will reflect the needs of this community.

Respectfully submitted,

Pedro Ares

Comprehensive Family Support Services Case Manager



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