

From Diverse Online

Current News

**Program Sells Mothers and Daughters on College Goals**

By Diverse Staff

Oct 15, 2008, 13:02

MESA, Ariz.

The Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program at Arizona State University, which has helped thousands of young women finish high school and attend college, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, ASU announced.

As part of the program, first-generation students make a 10-year commitment in the eighth grade to attend ASU workshops with their mothers and learn the skills needed to succeed.

ASU partners with 14 school districts in Phoenix and the East Valley to mentor students, raise their aspirations and teach skills for them to succeed. The university said the program has promoted higher education to more than 6,000 young women and their mothers over the years.

The outreach program will celebrate its 25th anniversary at a luncheon at 11 a.m. Oct. 24 at the Phoenix Convention Center, 100 N. Third St., Phoenix. The celebration event is sponsored primarily by the Helios Education Foundation, assisted by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona.

Currently the program serves more than 550 mother-daughter teams from the eighth grade through the university level. The teams attend regular evening workshops at ASU, and the girls receive one-on-one academic advising and peer mentoring. For participants who make a commitment and stay in the program, the university said 100 percent of them graduate from high school and go on to attend a community college or a university.

Three quarters of the eighth grade and high school participants maintain grade-point averages of 3.0 or better. Hundreds have gone on to graduate from college and pursue careers in education, law, journalism, medicine and business, according to ASU officials.

Eileana Felix said she remembers 30-minute bus rides with her mother from Creighton School in Phoenix to ASU, as well as the encouragement from her mother and her ASU mentors. Felix graduated from ASU in 2006, and today she works with the Osborn School District as the preschool family advocate. Just as ASU helped her mother become active in her education, Felix helps parents of young children get involved in their child's education from the start.

Bridget Valenzuela, who entered the program in 1985 and graduated from ASU in 1995, says the time alone with her mother was a rare opportunity in a family of six. Her three younger sisters clamored to join the program when they reached eighth grade.

"The program has given my family a perspective on higher education that not many families from Guadalupe are exposed to," says Valenzuela, who is now a middle school science teacher in the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community.

"I remember meeting an ASU student that was studying math, when I visited the campus during my eighth grade year," she said. "It was the first time I had ever met a Hispanic female that enjoyed math, and in my world in 1986 that was unheard of. And I realized what my mom had been telling me was true, how good grades are important and how confidence can make a difference in achievement."

Zoriana Hidalgo's mother, Consuelo, decided to go to college herself after they joined the program

in 1991, and today she has a bachelor's and master's degree from ASU. Zoriama also earned her bachelor's and master's from ASU, and now is a fourth grade teacher at Seoul American Elementary School at a U.S. military base in South Korea.

When Michelle Morales entered the program in 1996, her mother, Lucy, was inspired to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Phoenix and a master's from ASU. Lucy is a certified public manager for the City of Tempe. Michelle, who graduated from ASU in 2005 and went on to DePaul University for a master's, is a professional cellist and also a public relations representative in Chicago.

"My daughter and I became a team; we encouraged and supported each other," says Lucy. "The program made such a difference in our lives by providing us with a support system and the tools to succeed in college. The academic success that we achieved is a result of the preparation and commitment that we received from the Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program staff."

The program is open to all female students in participating school districts who meet academic requirements and will be the first generation in their family to attend college. For more information about the program, visit [www.asu.edu/hmdp](http://www.asu.edu/hmdp) or call Maria Moreno, (480) 965-5838.

Email the editor: [editor@diverseeducation.com](mailto:editor@diverseeducation.com)

[Click here](#) to post and read comments

© Copyright 2005 by DiverseEducation.com