



# Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

## — *Latino Population 2003*

*Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families*

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

### ***The Problem***

- Georgia has the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing Latino population in the U.S. Georgia's Latino population increased by 300% during the last ten year period.
- According to the US Census 2000, the Latino population (12.5% of the total population) exceeded the African American population (12.3% of the total population) in the United States. Latinos are the largest minority in the country.
- Furthermore, 5.3% of the population in Georgia are Latinos. There are 435,227 Latinos in Georgia. 6% of the children under the age of 18 in Georgia are Latinos (2003 Kids Count)
- According to the Georgia Diabetes Advisory Council, Latinos have the second highest rate (6.9%) of diabetes prevalence.
- Research studies conducted by UGA faculty have found that housing and transportation are the largest issues facing the new immigrants to the state.
- The language barrier, health care, and education are additional issues impacting the population and their ability to cope with Georgia's cultural, legal, and economic norms.

### ***Research-based Solutions***

- Recent immigrants benefit from educational programs that help them adjust to a new way of life. Research-based programs in extension provide information essential to access housing, understand nutrition and health care, address childcare needs, and learn basic financial skills needed to avoid financial scams and unscrupulous overcharging.

### ***Extension's Role***

- Family and Consumer Sciences agents are the leading source of research-based, reliable consumer education and information in the state. Many programs are currently being translated into Spanish to address the needs of the growing Latino population in Georgia.
- Several FACS agents are learning Spanish and about Hispanic culture to better serve the needs of growing Latino population.

### ***Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem***

- Provided educational programs to nearly 5,000 Latino participants. Almost 66% of them were reached by foods and nutrition extension programs; 6% of them were reached by diabetes extension programs; 7% of them were reached by Indoor Air Quality extension programs; and 4% of them were reached by food safety extension programs.
- Various educational programs and extension publications such as water quality protection, child care, and nutrition were delivered in Spanish.

## *Impact on Georgians*

- Over 93% of the Latinos who participated in the *Indoor Air Quality Education Program* said it was helpful to understand indoor air quality issues, problems, and alternatives. The majority of the Latinos who participated in the program said that they plan to implement healthy indoor air quality practices. For example, 91% said that they plan to inspect their homes for mold and bug problems; 89% said that they plan to change the filters on heating and air conditioning units at every three months; and 86% said they plan to tell their family and friends about Radon gas and its effects on their healths.
- Nearly 92% of the Latinos who participated in the *Diabetes Education Program* said that it was very helpful to learn about diabetes and preventive measures. Most of the Latinos who completed the program cited healthy habits. For example, 61% said that they plan to eat at least two fruits each day; 53% said that they plan to identify the sign of low and high blood glucose levels; 61% said that they plan to modify their own recipes to cut sugar, fat or sodium; and 58% said that they plan to have their blood pressure checked regularly.
- Almost 80% of the Latinos who completed the *ServSafe Manager Certification Training* improved their food safety knowledge. Over 66% of them improved their food safety behavior.
- The Latinos who participated in *Food and Nutrition Education* programs learned to adopt healthy dietary practices. For example, 60% learned to eat low-fat snacks and desserts; 73% said that they plan to make sure that they eat at least five fruits and vegetables each day; and 64% said that they plan to eat at least two servings of low-fat dairy products each day.
- Many Extension agents who studied Spanish and Latino culture in Mexico have developed educational programs for the growing Latino population in Georgia.

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