



# Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

## — *Latino Population 2005*

### **Learning for Life**

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

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### ***The Problem***

- Georgia has the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest growing Latino population in the U.S. Georgia's Latino population increased by 300% between 1990 and 2000. The projected Georgia Latino population increase between 2000 and 2004 is 37.5% (Georgia County Guide 2005).
- Georgia is the state with the 11<sup>th</sup> largest Latino population in the U.S. (National Council of La Raza)
- 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.
- The estimated Latino population in Georgia was 598,322, in 2004. This is 6.8% of the total population in Georgia (Georgia County Guide 2005).
- "Latinos represent an increasing share of workers and taxpayers, yet they are overwhelmingly vulnerable to economic downturns and experience high poverty rates, especially among working families with children" (National Council of La Raza).
- 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 child care 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 Extension Agents are learning Spanish and Hispanic culture to better serve the needs of growing Latino population.
- Spanish speaking bilingual educators were recruited to reach the growing Latino population.

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

- Family and Consumer Sciences Extension programs reached 12,180 Latinos and provided over 20,700 hours education in 2005. Of them, 44% were reached by nutrition and chronic disease prevention extension programs; 4% were reached by financial literacy and fraud prevention education programs; 44% were reached by child and family development programs; 4% were reached by housing and indoor air quality education programs; and 4% were reached by food safety extension programs.
- Family and Consumer Sciences Extension employed 12 Spanish-speaking extension field staff to serve the needs of the growing Latino population in Georgia in 2005.
- Various educational programs and extension publications such as water quality protection, child care,

and nutrition were delivered in Spanish.

## ***Impact on Georgians***

- Of the Latinos who participated in the *Diabetes Education Program*, 92% said that it was helpful to learn about diabetes and preventive measures. Many Latinos who completed the program said that they plan to follow appropriate healthy habits. For example, 74% planned to modify their recipes to cut sugar, fat or sodium; 61% plan to follow a meal plan to control their intake of carbohydrate; 64% planned to have their blood pressure regularly; and 58% planned to identify the signs of low and high blood glucose levels.
- All the Latinos who participated in food and nutrition extension programs said that those were helpful to learn about healthy meal planning and dietary practices. At the end of the training, most of them said that they plan to follow healthy dietary guidelines. For example, 75% planned to follow simple nutritious recipes; 56% planned to eat the recommended servings from the five food groups daily; 69% planned to consume fat-free or reduced fat milk; 58% planned to eat at least 2 fruits daily; and 66% planned to think about healthy food choices when deciding what to feed their families.
- Of the Latino participants who completed the food safety education programs, 96% said that those were very helpful to understand food safety practices. Most of the participants said that they plan to apply recommended food safety practices. For example, 88% planned to use a thermometer to decide whether meat, poultry or fish is done when cooking it; 91% planned to wash their hands with hot running water and soap for at least 20 seconds after handling raw meats, poultry, and fish; and 87% planned to thaw food either in the refrigerator, in cold running water, or in the microwave right before cooking.
- Ninety-five percent of the Latinos who participated in the *Indoor Air Quality* education programs said that those were helpful to improve the quality of indoor air. Most of the participants in *Indoor Air Quality* programs planned to apply healthy indoor air practices. For example, 73% planned to inspect their home to check for mold and bug problems; 79% planned to tell their families about the problems caused by mold, bugs, and rot; and all the participants planned to use integrated pest management approach to protect their families from the risk of using pesticide in their homes.
- All the Latino participants in the radon education program improved their knowledge about radon hazards and preventive measures. Most of them cited that they plan to implement remedial measures. For example, 86% planned to test their home for radon gas and 64% planned to seal radon entry points into the home and contact a certified radon mitigator if elevated radon levels are detected.
- All the Latinos who completed the *ServSafe® Employee Certification Training* improved their food safety knowledge. At the end of the training, most of the participants said that they plan to follow recommended food safety practices. For example, 100% planned to wash, rinse and then sanitize their cutting boards especially after cutting raw meat, poultry or fish; 92% planned to wash their hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before working with food; 92% planned to use a thermometer to decide if meat, poultry, egg dishes or fish are done before serving; and 85% planned to thaw foods in the refrigerator, in the refrigerator, in cold running water, or in the microwave right before cooking.

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