



La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
Abuelos y Nietos Juntos Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Monthly Support Group *Platica*
September 2010 – May 2011

INTRODUCTION

La Fe Policy Research and Education Center (La Fe PREC) is a non-profit organization established in San Antonio in January 2005. A strategic focus of La Fe PREC is the “*bienestar*” (well-being) of seniors, including grandparent raising grandchildren (GRG). In 2007, La Fe PREC established the, *Abuelos y Nietos Juntos* (Grandparents and Grandchildren Together) Program, with the goal of demonstrating improvements in the health and *bienestar* of Latino GRG and their grandchildren. In May 2011, the project completed its fourth year.

SERVICES

A core component of the program is a two-hour, monthly Spanish support group “*platica*” (discussion) for nine months. The intended outcomes for GRG are self-empowerment, civic engagement and advocacy. Diverse *bienestar* topics are discussed during the “*platicas*”, guided by GRG input. Guest speakers include community partners who provide the services most needed by GRG. A monthly packet provided to the GRG includes information on community resources and educational/recreational events. GRG have become strong advocates and navigators in securing services. They have benefited from support group *platicas*. They learned about community resources; received mutual support in problem-solving and built trusting relationships

PROFILE OF GRG AND THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

Of the 31 GRG who attended the Spanish support group during the school year, 16 (49%) attended 1-2 sessions, 5 (17%) 3-5 sessions and 10 (33%) 6 – 9 sessions. Of the GRG who participated, 26 (84%) were women and 5 (16%) were men. The mean age was 62 for females/64 for males. All but two of the GRG (94%) were voluntary caregivers, with no CPS involvement. Most GRG relied on Social Security as their only source of income. Only one GRG reported an income over \$35,000+; three from \$25,000 to \$35,000. All the others reported income of under \$25,000. These GRG cared for a total of 54 grandchildren, ranging from one to six grandchildren, ages from 3 months to 18 years of age. Some “sandwich” generation GRG also were caregivers for their aging parents.

Of the 54 grandchildren, the majority (52%) were pre-teens and teenagers. The younger children (48%) ranged in age from 3 months to 10 years. There were 28 girls and 26 boys. The mean number of years a grandchild had resided with a GRG was 7 years but ranged from 3 month to 15 year. All but two of the grandchildren had health insurance, primarily Medicaid. Most grandchildren (85%) resided in GRG households with annual incomes of less than \$24,999.

NEXT STEPS

The *Abuelos y Nietos Juntos* Program has validated the benefits to family *bienestar* resulting from participation in the mutual support group *platica*, where GRG share their life experiences and learn from each other and community partners. Their self-confidence has encouraged them to be proactive advocates with community leaders and elected officials to create more awareness of the issues and barriers GRG confront. In 2011-12, the *Abuelos* Support Group *platica* will continue, civic engagement activities will be expanded and advocacy will continue for a 1-stop

resource center for GRG and legislative policies supportive of GRG. Starting in September 2011, GRG will have the opportunity to engage in leadership development/promotora training, to enhance their skills to become better advocate for the *bienestar* of their grandchildren and themselves.

GRG PLATICA SUPPORT PARTNERS

