



ON THE

MOVE

family *bridges*
lazos de familia

2015 FAMILY BRIDGES ANNUAL REPORT



A LETTER FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Have you ever wondered why trees take on different shapes and sizes? If you have a preschooler, this would be the sort of thing they would ask. So it is that our four year old asked me why the trees located down our neighborhood walking trail touched each other. Shortly thereafter, I learned that in order to understand how a tree grows, you actually need to look at it in relation to its environment. So when you step back and look at the whole scenery, you no longer see each tree by itself but within a group of trees. And only when you see it as a part of a whole, can you understand why it takes the shape it does. Every tree fits together and as a group forms one large crown.

If even trees need one another to grow, how much more do we human beings need each other in order to grow? Humans need relationships, experiences and opportunities to grow. These are all external factors that we cannot find within ourselves, but can find in our environment, in our community.

Unfortunately, we sometimes come across very acidic soils and rouged terrains that together create very difficult conditions for our children to grow. The violence, the lack of resources and the familial stress all stifle children's potential.

What we have found is that when enough light reaches the roots, change can happen. As we work to raise local leaders and champions in each community, we are encouraged by every day miracles and by the transformational change that is occurring in the lives of the most vulnerable.

Family Bridges believes that for growth to occur, we need to work alongside parents, grassroots leaders, and local champions who are committed to preserving family values. When we come together and collaborate and leverage each other's strengths toward a common goal, our sense of community is fortified and we grow tall together.

We welcome you to learn about how Family Bridges equips and serves champions and community leaders, who in turn love and serve children, students, individuals, couples and families.

Alicia La Hoz, PsyD



ABOUT

FAMILY BRIDGES

OUR MISSION

Promote thriving communities by delivering services to strengthen family relationships, while embracing their cultural and spiritual values.

OUR VISION

Strong families with purpose-driven children, leaders of their generation, committed to their communities.

OUR PURPOSE

Family Bridges believes that we all have a longing for happiness in our relationships. With that in mind, we are committed to empowering families, couples, individuals, students and children with relationship skills that will transform their lives, relationships, and communities.



OVERALL GOALS

Encourage and promote healthy marriages, relationships and healthy families;

Sustain, enable and inspire couples, families, individuals and students to aspire towards practicing ongoing healthy conflict-resolution and communication skills;

Help minorities access healthy marriage and relationship supports;

Develop new, culturally appropriate resources to help individuals prepare for, build, restore and maintain healthy relationships;

Develop and promote edutainment resources for the latino community;

Reduce community barriers that keep individuals from using new and existing services;

Help individuals learn the importance of preparing for marriage;

Strengthen micro-enterprise program providing business and marketing skills to local entrepreneurs interested in developing their own small business;

Develop AVANCE model to promote healthy marriages and families in communities;

Expand Family Bridges to Phoenix, Arizona region.



HOW WE SERVE OUR COMMUNITY

Family Bridges believes in holistically serving the family and the community. We know that people live their lives multi-dimensionally and many daily interactions and outside factors influence perceptions, decisions and lifestyle. Therefore, we serve individuals, couples, teenagers and children in locations that are already a part of their day-to-day routines - their church, community center, school, workplace, etc. Once we have empowered the family with relational wellness skills, we then provide them with the opportunity to gain leadership skills to transform their community, and/or professional and economic development to help them gain independence.

Once participants complete our tiers of financial services, we strongly encourage them to join the movement and make a difference in the lives of their family, neighborhood and community.

Our programs areas are as follows:

- Family Strengthening
- Social Emotional Learning
- Leadership Development
- Economic Development
- Edutainment

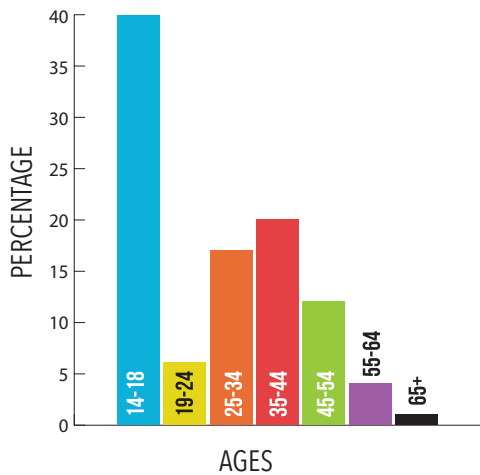
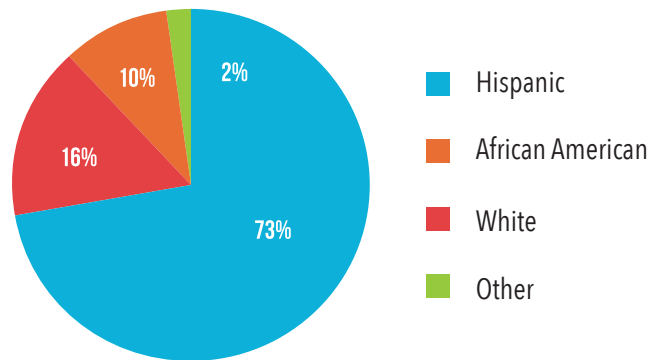
For more information on each of these areas, turn the page or visit us online at familybridgesusa.org.

WHO WE SERVE

Since 2006, Family Bridges has served over 100,000 individuals via workshops, conferences, retreats and special events. Our programs currently extend to eight Illinois counties: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Lake, McHenry, Will and Winnebago. Together these counties make up a population of just over 8.7 million persons, of whom 22% are Hispanic.

Based on completed surveys, is the demographic make-up of our participants is:

ETHNICITY



GENDER





FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Family Bridges provides family-strengthening services to over 4,000 couples and singles every year, focused on encouraging commitment, improving communication and teaching strategies to resolve conflict.

WORKSHOPS

Family Bridges workshops aim to provide participants with the skills they need to develop and maintain healthy relationships. On average, over 50% of couples and singles that attend our workshops improve skill sets in areas of communication, conflict resolution and commitment - in both the short and long term.

We have a 72% completion rate because we not only provide participants with education and training, but we also help to break down barriers, such as transportation, lack of childcare, and language, obstacles that would otherwise keep them from attending a class.

MARRIAGE 911

The couples in Marriage 911 are some of the most distressed couples served by Family Bridges. In 2015, facilitators helped 80 couples work through issues such as infidelity, abuse, raising kids with special needs, lack of forgiveness, lack of social support, and other relationship stressors.

LOVE CHALLENGE CONFERENCE

Family Bridges hosts an annual family and marriage conference that takes place in a different community each year. In 2015 we partnered with Chicago Public Schools to host the conference in Chicago, IL. The conference features special speakers, various workshops and separate programs for children and teens.



FAMILY BRIDGES *INSPIRES, EDUCATES & EMPOWERS*

The saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child." At Family Bridges, we too believe it takes a community to help parents raise children who can become productive members of society. Family Bridges understands the importance of serving single parents—moms and dads who have the tough job of playing both parental roles or who find their style in conflict with the parenting style of the other parent. More than ever, we need to work together as a village to inspire, educate and empower parents to be actively involved in their children's lives.

Did you know:

- Four out of ten babies are born to single mothers nationwide according to Pew Research Center.
- Federal data shows that children raised in cohabiting households are three times more likely to be physically, sexually or emotionally abused than children in intact, married biological parent homes.
- These children are also significantly more likely to experience delinquency, drug use and school failure.

Meet Alejandro Quezada, a single father of Leslie, 14; Mia, 10; and Ashanti, 8. Describing his role as a single father, he says, "It's a challenge, especially in a world with so many influences.

Quezada says his priority is "to love, guide and protect my children from all influences: friends, media, the environment they're growing up in, information provided in school, etc. I'd like to be the filter which the information they receive goes through."

One of Quezada's biggest challenges, as he shares joint custody with their mother, is trying to provide a positive environment for his children when they return from an environment he describes as unhealthy. When his children are under his care, he tries to give them his total love and attention.

They've even agreed to stay disconnected from electronics when they're together to allow for quality family time and space for open communication. Quezada wants them to know how much he loves them, not only through words, but also through his actions.

Quezada even proudly brags that his teenage daughter is still "Daddy's little girl" as she confides in him about boys and other matters. He also feels proud that he has instilled in his children a positive attitude toward any situation they may face individually or as a family.

"He hopes others can learn from his experiences, enjoy the privilege of having a tight bond with their children and become a better couple."

But it wasn't always this way. Quezada attributes this to the positive impact of the Family Bridges workshops. Shortly after his separation from his wife, he learned at a Family Bridges program that more than 50 percent of jail inmates lack a father figure, which contributes to their lack of respect for society and authority.

His desire to guarantee his children to have an actively involved father led him to participate in two workshops, "The Strongest Link" for couples, and "How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk or Jerkette" for singles. Both workshops, he says, opened his eyes to shortcomings such as the need to respect his partner, respect her decisions and the need to change his views about "machismo" – something he always saw as normal was, in fact, abuse.

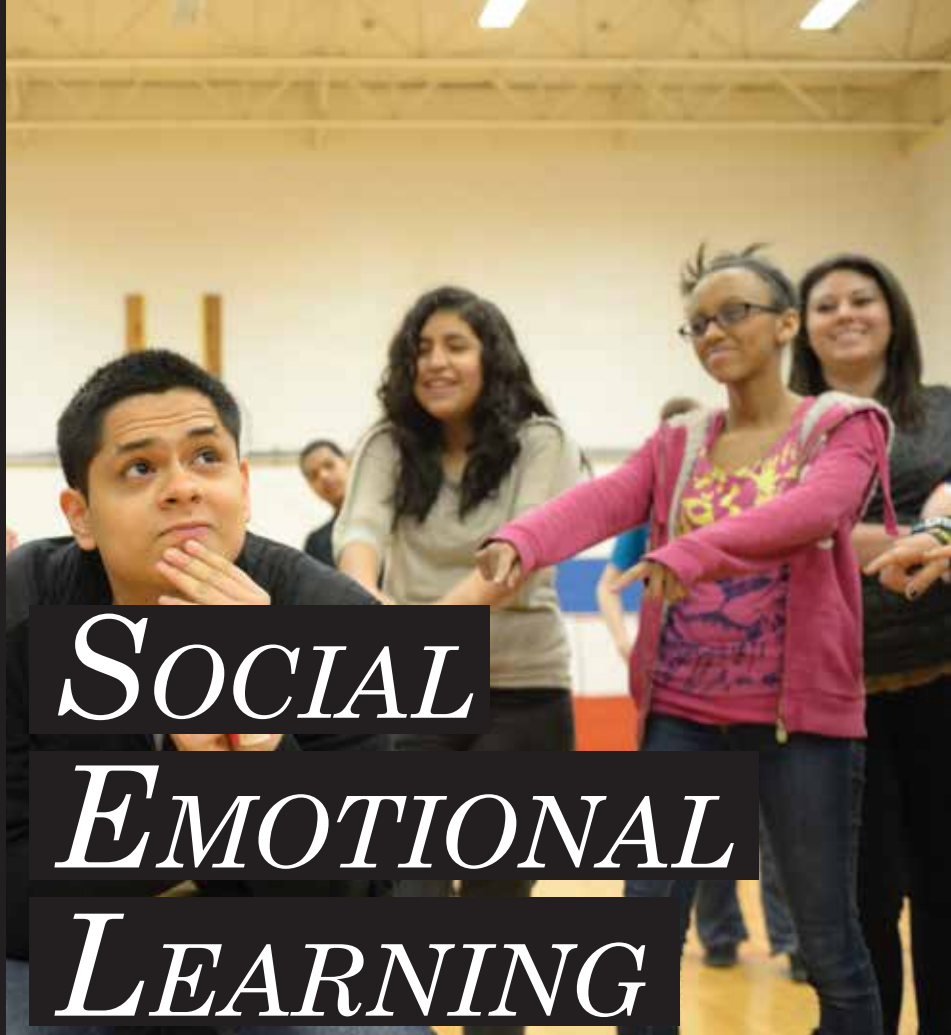
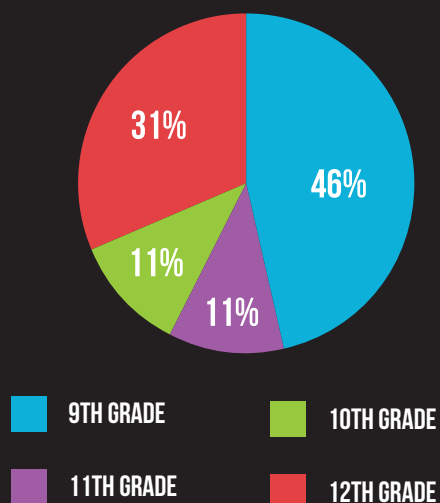
Quezada has joined the Family Bridges team as a facilitator sharing with husbands and single parents about his mistakes. He hopes others can learn from his experiences, enjoy the privilege of having a tight bond with their children and become a better couple. Quezada feels confident having the tools and skills needed to raise his family in a healthy and loving environment.

Many factors contribute to a student's ability to focus on their education. Factors such as relationship drama, family conflict and hormones can hamper a student's success in achieving academic goals and Family Bridges wants to help these students overcome these factors that become barriers. We help students by teaching skills that help them deal with distractions and resolve conflicts.

In 2015, we educated over 2,000 high school students, equipping them to make positive life choices and become involved in their communities. Family Bridges understands that we must reach students before they lose hope and equip them with the skills they need to succeed in spite of overwhelming odds. We teach teenagers healthy relationship skills, self-awareness, personal responsibility, community involvement and other social emotional learning skills. We also motivate them to formulate plans for their future through lessons on goal setting and budgeting.

Students who complete our programs improve their social and emotional learning skills by an average of 47%. High schools implementing the Family Bridges program into their educational structure, report having lower truancy, dropout and teen pregnancy rates.

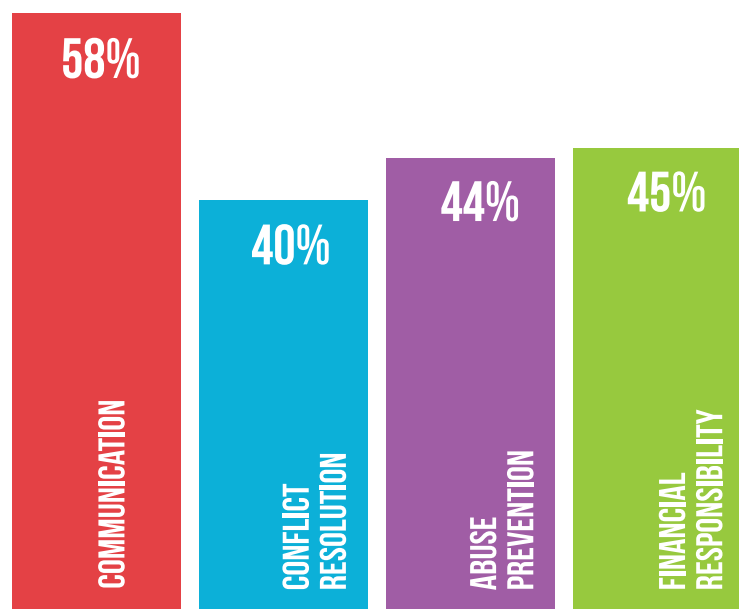
STUDENTS BY GRADE LEVEL



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

HOW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE DOING NOW

Based on completed pre- and post-program surveys, here's the percentage of high school students that have improved their skill sets...



In 2013, Family Bridges began the Growing Together program, a series of workshops to help individuals start their own business to help the low-income individuals we serve reach economic self-sufficiency and to provide a strategy for sustainability for Family Bridges as an organization. Two years later, the program continues to grow.



MICRO ENTERPRISE

WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY

A single mother launches her plan to have her own mobile business after participating in Family Bridges' micro-enterprise program, Creciendo Juntos (Growing Together).

Starting a small business is the dream of many, but only a few dare to do it. With these brave entrepreneurs in mind, Family Bridges launched its Growing Together program. In this program, people with a desire to start a small business can learn from experts in various areas, from how to market your business to how to develop a business plan for it to be successful.

Participating in the very first workshop was María Franco, a single mother with a dream of becoming the owner of her very own mobile business - a food truck to sell tamales. Maria had previously participated in several Family Bridges workshops and later became a volunteer. With the entrepreneurial spirit that characterizes Maria, when she became aware of the new program, she immediately

registered. "This was the opportunity I had been waiting for," says Maria, "I had no experience, so when I learned that they would teach me to develop my business vision, and as I already had that dream, I wanted to take the advantage of the opportunity."

Maria attended each session and tells us, "I learned how to do things well, how to have brand recognition, and how to have and maintain a clientele. Now I have expectations. I learned from other entrepreneurs how to strategize, develop and carry out my plan." Maria's dream is to "have a modern truck to sell tamales, with a regular route and with customers that follow me on Twitter and Facebook." During the program, Maria learned practical tips from various experts that will help her realize her dream. She says that even though she knew what she wanted, she did not know how to develop it into reality. That was the biggest lesson. After finishing the course, Maria says that she made her dream come true. Now Maria has started her business, Superb Mexican Cuisine, selling tamales and food for parties, and is in the process of acquiring a truck.

She also shared that despite financial constraints, she managed to buy a car so she can drop off food at people's home. Thanks to Family Bridges, Maria says she learned to be intentional in regards to her business plan, as she is aware that it is not something that will happen overnight. To those who have the dream to start a small business, Maria

says, "Your time has come. Take this opportunity. And do not miss any of the classes because you learn a lot from each of the experts and from each student as well."

Family Bridges commends Maria for having the courage to put her ideas into action and for taking the steps to help her start it. Maria, we hope to see your mobile business very soon!

"NOW I HAVE EXPECTATIONS. I LEARNED FROM OTHER ENTREPRENEURS HOW TO STRATEGIZE, DEVELOP AND CARRY OUT MY PLAN."



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Volunteers make a difference by helping Family Bridges strengthen marriages, relationships, and families everyday. Most volunteers are veterans of our programs, and eagerly share the skills that helped improve their own lives and relationships. Volunteers participating in the program serve under the values of hope, respect, honesty, unity, identity and balance. They serve in various capacities, including providing mentorship to other couples.

In 2015, volunteers donated over 2,787 hours of their time. They saved us over \$59,000 in operational costs by using their skills and talents to help carry out the mission and vision of Family Bridges. Family Bridges also provided leadership and mentorship training to over 200 volunteers, equipping them with knowledge and skills to transform their community.



PUBLIC AWARENESS

One of Family Bridges' goals is to promote and create public awareness on the importance of healthy marriages, relationships and families. We do this by featuring PSAs on various media outlets and hosting family-friendly events in the Chicagoland area. We are also frequent speakers on news and radio programs, such as Univisión Chicago, El Patron 95.5 FM and Moody Radio.

PSAs & ADVERTISING

Family Bridges has an extensive marketing and advertising campaign. You can find our advertisements in every corner of the Chicagoland area from CTA trains and buses, to flyers at local restaurants and grocery stores, to radio, TV and online ads. Our goal is to change the perception of healthy relationships, one impression at a time.

COMMUNICATION

Family Bridges believes in providing free content that the public can easily access. Our communication outlets include: blogs, podcasts, e-newsletters and social media. Most of our content is available in both Spanish and English.

EVENTS

Family Bridges events increase awareness of healthy marriages and what they look like; increase access to services to individuals that, due to barriers, are hesitant to become involved in a marriage support group or service; serve as a booster session to help motivate graduates of our programs to live out and practice the skills learned; and rally the community around healthy marriage messages.

93% OF ATTENDEES SAID THEY ENJOYED THE EVENT THEY ATTENDED VERY MUCH

DATE NIGHT CHICAGOLAND (DNC)

DNC is a campaign where we challenge couples and loved ones to go out on a date, once a week for four straight weeks in the month of February and March. We challenge couples to grow closer together.



EDUTAINMENT

People love to be entertained and they love a good story. Edutainment is designed to both educate and entertain. Through our radio series and upcoming theatre production, we've intertwined strong and frequent messages about healthy relationships and families with entertaining characters and engaging story line.

Our goal is to create an entertaining but educational content where listeners and theatre-goers can identify with the characters and their situations and provide insight on how to handle the difficult realities that we face as individuals and families – all with an emphasis on Latino culture.

¡QUÉ GENTE, MI GENTE!

¡Que Gente, Mi Gente! is a daily radio novela about family, community, love and life set inside the comings and goings of a very culturally diversified neighborhood.

It includes 65, 2-minute skits with 45 professional actors and reflections with Dr. Alicia La Hoz, author, CEO of Family Bridges and Licensed Clinical Psychologist.

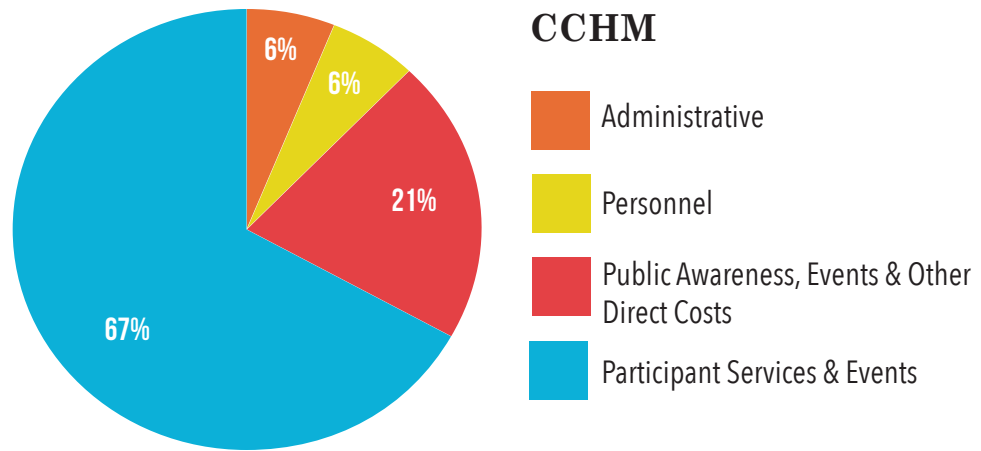
¡Que Gente, Mi Gente! is currently airing its 5th season, is in production of its 6th season and planning for its 7th season. It currently airs on just over 600 radio stations in 25 countries.

LOS SECRETOS DE SANTA MÓNICA

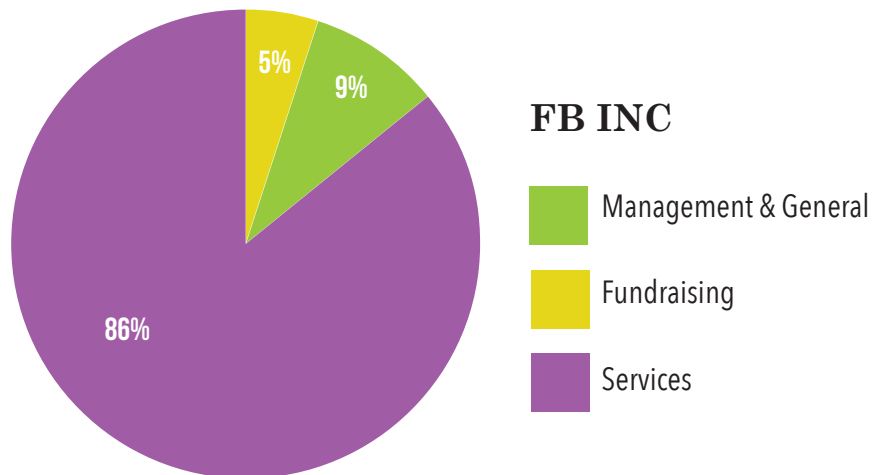
Santa Mónica de la Punta Gorda is the multicultural town of the popular radio series, *¡Que Gente, Mi Gente!*. In this small town we see the adventures, conflicts, romance and differences that its residents experience. Los Secretos de Santa Mónica is an off-broadway style theatre production written and produced by Latinos, with an original script, sound score and choreography. It is entertaining, comical, dramatic and intriguing.

It provides an enriching experience to the Hispanic population, in the language they know and understand; with the culture and story they can relate to, while raising funds for future programs and services.

Family Bridges is a 501 (c) (3) organization. Meier Clinics Foundation is the fiscal agent for the Community Centered Healthy Marriage grant. Both the CCHM grant administered by Meier Clinics and Family Bridges 501 (c) (3) are audited by an independent auditor.



SEPTEMBER 2014 - OCTOBER 2015



JANUARY 2015 - DECEMBER 2015

KEY PEOPLE

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(Ex-Officio)*

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Jorge Davila, Superacion Familiar

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Penny Gomez, University of Chicago

Ken Kalina, New Life Centers of Chicago

Alicia La Hoz, Psy.D., Family Bridges (Ex-Officio)

*Regina Madigan, Finance Director Latin America
at ZimmerBiomet*

Rick Rivero, Connections Marketing

Debbie Speck, Elevate USA

*Christian Zapata, LCSW March at the Friedman
Place*

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Archdiocese of Chicago, Family Ministries Office

Casa Central

Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago

Hispanic Bible School

I AM ABLE Center for Family Development

Instituto Superación Familiar

Lawndale Christian Health Center

Manjarres & Associates

Mano a Mano Family Resource Center

Meier Clinics

New Life Centers of Chicagoland

St. Pius V Parish

St. Teresa Parish

*The Salvation Army Family & Community
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