Creating Confianza

University of North Carolina
School of Social Work
Chatham County, NC

Problem:
The Latino population in North Carolina has grown dramatically in recent years. Chatham County, located 30 miles south of Chapel Hill, reports that 1533 of its 7000 public school students are Latino immigrants or children of immigrants. Lack of insurance, stigma, a native population ambivalent about new immigrants and absence of professionals able to provide culturally appropriate services challenge the capacity of the community to respond to these needs.

Solution:
Provide a bicultural, bilingual school-family liaison to serve as a cultural broker between parents and schools and connect students and their families to mental health services through bilingual community-based providers.

Program:
Creating Confianza is a partnership between Chatham County Schools, UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work, and El Futuro, a mental health clinic serving Latinos. The project has trained a leadership group within the school in Chatham Middle School and Jordan Matthews High School on cultural competence and trained parents on youth mental health issues. The family liaison also provides clinical services for students at school and at El Futuro.

Impact:
The school-family liaison has helped the schools and parents develop a better, more trusting relationship, has strengthened partnerships between the school and community and enhanced the coordination of efforts to help the immigrant and refugee population.