

Organization: El Pueblo**County:** Wake**Address:** 4 N. Blount St., Ste. 200
Raleigh, N.C. 27601**Phone:** 919-835-1525 ext. 229**Website:** <http://www.elpueblo.org/>**Project:** Event/Latina Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Conference*****Below are excerpts from their final report*****

About the Project: El Pueblo in collaboration with the N.C. Reproductive Justice Coalition organized a one day linguistically and culturally appropriate conference entitled, “ Hablando lo Prohibido: Una conferencia sobre la salud sexual, salud reproductiva y derechos humanos” (Speaking the Forbidden: A Conference about reproductive health, sexual health and human rights) for Latinas living in Chatham, Durham, Orange and Wake counties. The NCRJC organized this conference to respond to requests from Latinas in these communities for training on sexual and reproductive health and rights (in addition to addressing the high incidence of adolescent and unplanned pregnancies as well as HIV and STIs in N.C.). This event coincided with other events being held by the Orange County Rape Crisis Center in April in support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The event was held on Saturday, April 18th from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the United Church of Christ in Chapel Hill. This one day event was a tremendous success, with great attendance and incredible community support with several businesses donating food and some restaurants providing gift cards for the event. The workshops offered during the event addressed topics of interest for the Latino(a) community in our state (including topics such as anatomy and reproductive health, family planning, child sexual abuse prevention, positive parenting, housing rights and an overview of mental health and the plenary sessions focused on immigrants’ and human rights). Organizations and health centers from the community attended the event as exhibitors to increase participants’ awareness of the existing resources in this area and participants’ connection to those offering services.

Successes: “Hablando lo Prohibido” was a powerful conference which provided a safe space for Latino(as) to learn and to discuss topics that have been traditionally considered taboo in our communities and are of extreme urgency. Beginning with a plenary session/activity which engaged the audience, participants were encouraged to actively participate and interact with presenters and with other community members. Also by providing activities for the entire family at NO cost, participants were able to make this a family affair. There are very limited spaces where families feel safe addressing such personal issues. We are proud to have created a space that fostered participation, listening, sharing, and a sense of support. By raising Latinas’ awareness (of sexual and reproductive health, rights, and services) the Coalition has taken the first step to reducing risky behaviors that increase the incidence of unplanned pregnancies, HIV, and STIs not only in adults but also in Latino youth.

