

Organization: Mi Casa Su Casa Centro de Recursos**County:** Mecklenburg**Address:** 6030 Albemarle Rd.
Charlotte, N.C. 28212**Phone:** 704-536-9845**Website:** <http://www.micasasucasactr.org/>**Project:** Educational Sessions for Latino Teens*****Below are excerpts from their final report*****

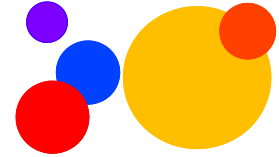
About the Project: A total of 42 Latina girls between 12 and 18 years old were directly served through three pregnancy/STD/HIV prevention workshops. Thirteen parents participated at a separate workshop we provided (during the first workshop for Latina girls). This took place while their daughters attended their workshop.

In addition, thanks to the N.C. Healthy Start Foundation (grant) thousands of Latino listeners had the opportunity to hear a live one-hour broadcast four days before the teenager's last workshop. This radio broadcast featured an HIV/STD specialist from the Mecklenburg County Health Department. This specialist talked in great detail about all types of sexual transmitted diseases and gave to the radio audience a full explanation of HIV and other STDs. The topic was focused on Latino teens, one of the most vulnerable populations. A lot of questions were appropriately answered as people called in to the show (Mi Casa Su Casa with "Sin Frontera" weekly radio show is broadcasting on station 1310 AM/La Tremenda). This station has the largest Latino audience in Charlotte.

In order to get the parents input, we organized and facilitated parents meeting. They had an opportunity to talk about the most pressing concerns and issues they are facing with their teenage girls at home. Information from teachers and a therapist at school was collected, and all this information gave us a clearer idea about what areas Latina girls need more concentrated help in.

The information collected from the two teen and one parent workshops also helped us evaluate the programs practicality. Some of the strategies used in the final workshops were developed further as a direct result of the first three workshops. The last workshop, featured individuals with real life problems directly related to high risk behaviors. For example, a 28 year old lady who was diagnosed with HIV when she was 18 years old told participants her story. With a clear message, she reached and enlightened them about the tragedy of HIV/AIDS and how to reduce risks by taking all precautions.

Successes: Last year there was an increase in dropout rates among Latina girls reported by the staff at Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools and the administration. Increases in Latino youth gang involvement has also been reported by Charlotte Mecklenburg Police and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Alcohol and drug-related offenses by Latino youth are also on the rise and increases in the amount of Latina pregnancies from ages as young as 13 years old. There is also a growing population of talented Latino



adolescents who graduate from CMS yet are unable to qualify as in-state residents to local colleges and universities. Therefore, they dropout of high school and engage in high risk behaviors.

After the completion of this program and due to the circumstances mentioned above we feel the workshops made a big impact in the way Latina girls view their responsibilities towards themselves in relation to high risk behaviors. Most of the Latina girls want to continue having open workshops where they can express themselves and learn. They also pledged to recruit other girls in their schools and are choosing to become leaders in getting the word out.