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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

In the last two years, a global pandemic has weighed heavily on our daily lives. At the same time, our community has borne witness to the exodus of Central and South American immigrants to the United States, fleeing from poverty and violence in record numbers—in part as a consequence of COVID-19 ravaging their countries. At home, we see the effects in the deterioration of mental health, especially among our young Hispanic community.

In the last six months, Elkhart County schools have been receiving an average of 2 to 3 new Hispanic immigrant students per week. Many of them have experienced trauma, abuse, death, and separation from their families during their immigration journey. Some have little formal schooling in their native countries, and most do not speak English and are not familiar with American culture. Concerned school administrators contacted NIHHC, and as a response to this pressing issue, we began offering the Bienvenido program to these new immigrant students in Elkhart and Goshen Community Schools during the school day. Bienvenido follows a curriculum that effectively connects our students to the community and improves their mental health. This past spring, almost 100 students attended the nine sessions. Almost immediately, we realized that the group sessions were not enough, and we hired bilingual social workers to offer individualized counseling sessions. Around 40% of the students benefited from the one-on-one sessions.

These sessions highlighted all of the challenges that these individuals face and why they risk their lives to come to this country. As a social worker, Nancy

Rodriguez-Lora recognized that “surprisingly, these students have lived and are living in difficult times, but express a will to overcome and succeed.” They cannot achieve this alone; they need a mentor that helps them take their asylum case forward, a guardian to take them to their medical or counseling appointments, and a trusted adult to support them. This can only be possible with the support of the entire community, the school system, and local officials. These young individuals need orientation to be able to adjust to a new culture and system. The responsibility to guide them forward and nurture their strength and persistence is in our hands.



Liliana Quintero

We want our Hispanic youth to be the smiling faces that walk our streets. Just as we have celebrated resilience for having survived the battle against COVID-19, we want them to be able to celebrate resilience for having abandoned their country, culture, language, and family—for giving up almost everything to stay. It is a long and painful process, but only with our help can they feel part of the community—with safety, respect, and dignity.

Let's work together in welcoming these youth who are ready to become the most loyal citizens of Elkhart County!

Sincerely,

Liliana Quintero
Executive Director

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

BIENVENIDO PROGRAM

Bienvenido (“Welcome”) focuses on building the emotional and behavioral health of Hispanic immigrants. The program improves the lives of community members by teaching them techniques that help them build their self-esteem, overcome their depression and anxiety, and improve their overall communication skills, among other goals.

Elkhart High School Freshman Division & Pierre Moran Middle School

January - May, 2022 - NIHC offered the Bienvenido program to 35 high school 9th graders and 20 middle school 7th and 8th graders in Elkhart Community Schools.



A group of students at Goshen High School celebrate their graduation after completing nine weeks of the Bienvenido program.

Goshen High School

February - May, 2022 - NIHC offered the Bienvenido program to 39 high school 9th - 12th graders in Goshen Community Schools. After a session on self-esteem, one student reported that his level of stress was reduced. “It is a process, but I am trying my best,” he said. “Actually, I am fighting less with my mom, thanks to the anger management techniques I learned!! I can see the results already.”

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

January - May, 2022 - NIHC offered the Bienvenido program to 17 adults at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Elkhart.

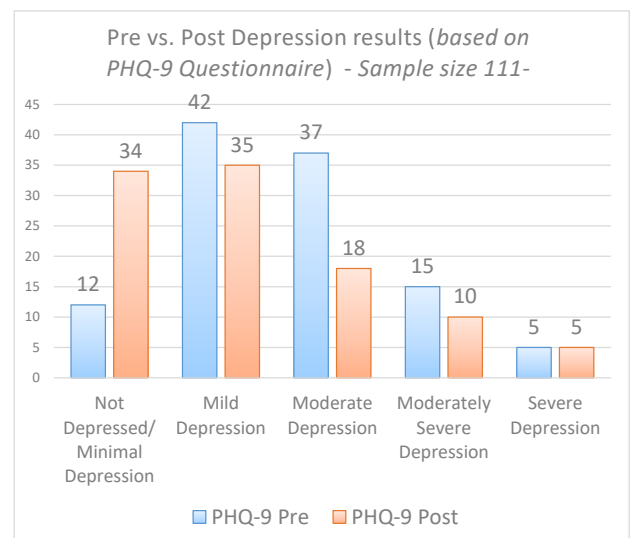
Bienvenido Results

To evaluate the impact of the Bienvenido program, the participants completed a pre and a post test, which include some questions from

the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) that is used to assess depression. The results below show how students responded positively to the program. There was a significant increase in minimal depression from 10% to 33%. Combining mild, moderate, and moderately severe depression, there was a reduction from 84% to 62% (22 fewer percentage points). These numbers, combined with expressions of relief and appreciation shared by participants, speak loudly to the success of the program.

The Bienvenido program’s impact is also made evident through the relationships participants build with facilitators, allowing us to analyze qualitative results. At Pierre Moran Middle School, for example, Bienvenido facilitators met a student, Luis, who shared his struggles in life. One of the co-facilitators took him out of the classroom, and in their conversation, encouraged him to keep active, avoid negative thoughts, and ride his bike. Through their talk, she learned that he didn’t have a bike.

The direct contact with students helps facilitators understand and assess needs in the community in general. “We can’t take anything for granted,” said Bienvenido co-facilitator, Nelly Jiménez, “and we can’t begin to know what each child is going through. But every step we take to provide support makes a difference in their lives.” When she discovered Luis’ birthday was approaching, she decided to surprise him with a bike. This small action made Luis’ day, and hopefully, will encourage him to take advantage of other opportunities that are just a bike ride away from his house.



EVENTS / TRAININGS

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER TRAINING

January & February, 2022 - NIHHC sponsored seven long-time volunteers to become certified Community Health Workers (CHWs). The online training was facilitated by ASPIN. Jimmy Dixon, one of the newly certified CHWs, mentioned that thanks to this training, he is “committed to seeking ways to help individuals thrive emotionally, mentally, and physically in their lives.” We are proud to welcome the new CHWs: Betty Calderón, Luna Campos, Gloria Chavarria, Jimmy Dixon, Zuleyja Prieto, María Sánchez Schirch, and Gaby Tovar.

NIHHC’S THANK YOU BRUNCH & RESILIENCE CELEBRATION

April 16, 2022 - NIHHC recognized the resilience of volunteers, partners, staff, and community members who have stood in the fight against COVID-19 during the last two years. The Thank You Brunch was held at the Concord Event Center, and over 100 people attended. NIHHC welcomed Elkhart Mayor, Rod Roberson, and Dr. Daniel Nafziger, Hospital Chief Medical Officer at Goshen Health, as the main speakers.

“I just got my second booster!” Mayor Roberson announced, noting that the pandemic is not over yet.

Dr. Nafziger reinforced the importance of getting vaccinated. “If you have not been vaccinated and have not been previously infected,” he said, “you should be concerned because a more transmissible variant is coming for you, and you may spread it to a more vulnerable family member or friend.”

Community members, Luis Aguilar and Dara Marquez, each shared powerful testimonials of their experiences during the pandemic, as both lost their fathers to COVID-19.

Gary Sieber, WNDU TV and weather anchor, graciously served as the Master of Ceremonies throughout the event. He led a moment of silence in

remembrance of all those who were lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BIENVENIDO FACILITATOR TRAINING

May & June, 2022 - In partnership with Bienvenido Community Solutions, LLC, NIHHC ran an intensive 4-session facilitator training. Eight NIHHC staff attended the training. The new bilingual facilitators bring a wealth of resources to Bienvenido participants, serving as role models and sharing their experiences with them, as well.



Attendees at the Bienvenido facilitator training. *Back row:* Angel Ayala, Luna Campos (CHW), Betty Calderón (CHW), María Ortega, Gamal Hernández, Zuleyja Prieto (MD, CHW). *Front row:* Gilberto Pérez (President & CEO of Bienvenido Community Solutions and Facilitator), Gloria Chavarria (CHW), Nelly Jiménez, Aurora León, and Gaby Tovar (CHW).



Staff and Community Health Workers (CHWs) are recognized during the Resilience Celebration. *Back row:* Betty Calderón (CHW), María Sánchez Schirch (CHW), Mario Teixeira (NIHHC Board Treasurer), Andy Spite (NIHHC Board President), Morey Mowat (NIHHC Board Vice-President), David Rivas (Contact Tracer), and Jimmy Dixon (CHW). *Front row:* Liliana Quintero (NIHHC Executive Director), Gloria Chavarria (CHW), Kumud Krishna (NIHHC Grant Coordinator), Alexandria Sánchez (NIHHC Marketing Coordinator), Gaby Tovar (CHW), Nelly Jiménez (Bienvenido Co-facilitator), Leslie Nungaray (Contact Tracer), and Luna Campos (CHW).

SPOTLIGHT ON GIVING

NIHHC is grateful for the generous support of the grantors, donors, and interns who make our initiatives possible.

Grants - \$745,000

- **CDC Foundation, Year 2:** Campaign to Increase Vaccination Coverage
- **Elkhart Rotary Club:** Bienvenido Program
- **Indiana Department of Health, Together We Will:** COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy, Access, & Structural and Systemic Barriers
- **Indiana FSSA Division of Mental Health and Addiction:** Bienvenido Program
- **Indiana Minority Health Coalition:** Program expenses & overhead expenses
- **REAL Services, CSBG CARES Act:** COVID-19 Activities
- **REAL Services, CSBG:** Healthy Hearts & Por Tu Familia Programs
- **Urban Institute:** Evidenced-based Promising Practices to Advance Vaccine Equity
- **Well Foundation:** Healthy Hearts Program

Corporate & Individual Donations - \$5,900

- Concord Event Center
- Community Foundation of Elkhart County
- Crossroads United Way
- Crane Fund for Widows and Children
- Culver Family Foundation
- K21 Health Foundation Director's Donation on behalf of Lisa M. O'Neill

Interns / Clinical Hours

- Miranda Reyes, Goshen College, Nursing major. Miranda donated her 30 nursing clinical hours as a Bienvenido program assistant.
- Lorena Morgan, Central Michigan University, Public Health Education and Spanish major. Lorena is interning with NIHHC this summer, supporting our COVID-19 vaccination clinics and Bienvenido program data analysis.

CHECK OUT NIHHC'S NEW WEBSITE!

We are excited to launch our revamped website, with more ways to connect with us and learn about our organization and community. Scan the QR code to see what's new!



Visit our new website
to learn more about
NIHHC!

NIHHC IN THE COMMUNITY - COVID-19 ACTIVITIES

Although it may feel like COVID-19 has retreated for many, the reality is that the pandemic has not ended. NIHHC remains committed to meeting the needs of the community to fight COVID-19 and continues to lead in initiatives that overcome systemic barriers to accessing health care services, such as those indicated below:

Systemic Barriers that the Hispanic Community Faces when Looking for Health Care



NIHHC's CONTINUOUS COVID-19 RESPONSE ACTIONS

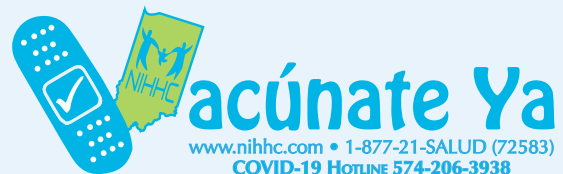
- **COVID-19 Vaccination & Testing Mobile Clinics.** NIHHC continues to directly provide and operate regular COVID-19 vaccination clinics in partnership with the Indiana Department of Health, Elkhart County Health Department, and Heart City Health Center.
- **COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign.** NIHHC's COVID-19 vaccination campaign, "Unite Against COVID-19," aims to increase vaccination rates and decrease vaccine hesitancy. A second-stage outdoor campaign will be "rolling out" soon. Keep your eyes open and give us a shout when you see it!
- **NIHHC COVID-19 Hotline.** A bilingual healthcare professional continues to be available to provide comprehensive information on testing/vaccination locations, symptoms, prevention, registration, and referrals to health agencies.
- **Bilingual Frequently Asked Questions Pamphlets and Other Print Materials.** NIHHC continues to develop and update material regarding general information about COVID-19 vaccines on a regular basis as guidelines change.
- **Bilingual Services at Testing and Vaccination Sites.** NIHHC counts on a pool of over 12 bilingual COVID-19-trained staff, five contact tracers, and eight Community Health Workers. They provide support with registration, interpretation, and critical outreach to the community.

- **Weekly Virtual COVID-19-related Educational Segments in Spanish on Facebook Live.** These classes are facilitated every Tuesday by a medical professional. They are broadcast live from 5-6 PM and recorded for later viewing, as well. Scan the QR code in the "Upcoming Events" section to follow us and enjoy these educational sessions.
- **Radio Health Interventions.** NIHHC speaks every Wednesday at 1:00 PM on La Raza Radio station. Listen to us on WKAM 1460 and learn about different health-related topics that will keep you up to date on issues associated with COVID-19.

COVID-19 VACCINATION & TESTING EVENTS IN ELKHART

January 2022 - April 2022 - As the weather turned cold and the omicron variant spread, NIHHC worked to move its regular COVID-19 vaccination clinics indoors at the Concord Event Center. With the arrival of spring, we returned to our outdoor drive-thru clinics in NIHHC's Elkhart parking lot, in partnership with the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH). Thus far, in 2022, NIHHC has provided 773 shots and 148 tests to the community at four clinics. In response to the general lack of testing sites available, NIHHC also distributed over 300 hundred at-home COVID-19 testing kits.

As the chart on the next page shows, since July 2021, NIHHC has provided 12 mobile COVID-19 vaccination and testing clinics, serving 2,395 people. Attendees came from 15 different cities throughout Elkhart, Noble, St. Joseph, Lagrange, and Kosciusko counties. The turnout continues to reflect the community's trust in NIHHC's events and the need for accessible vaccination clinics, held during the weekends at convenient and safe locations with welcoming providers. Clinics are open to all and accept both appointments and walk-ins, no insurance or fees required.



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NIHHC IN THE COMMUNITY - COVID-19 ACTIVITIES

NIHHC's MOBILE COVID-19 VACCINATION & TESTING CLINICS

Date	Location	Provider Partners	# 1 st doses	# 2 nd doses	# boosters	# tests	# adults	# children Ages 5-11 Ages 12-17	% Hispanic	Total Served
7/17/21	NIHHC	Heart City	151	1			103	49 (12-17)	96%	152
8/7/21	NIHHC	Heart City	150	148			196	102 (12-17)	96%	298
8/28/21	NIHHC	Heart City	95	119			139	75 (12-17)	87%	214
8/28/21	Our Lady of Guadalupe Church	KCHD, Warsaw Fire Dept.	131	1			92	40 (12-17)	82%	132
9/18/21	NIHHC	Heart City	54	66			90	30 (12-17)	85%	120
9/18/21	Our Lady of Guadalupe Church	KCHD, Warsaw Fire Dept.	52	109			111	50 (12-17)	73%	161
10/16/21	NIHHC	IDOH	63	59	17	17	126	13 (12-17)	76%	156
11/20/21	NIHHC	IDOH	86	19	103	33	153	43 (5-11) 12 (12-17)	69%	241
1/22/22	Concord Event Center	IDOH	107	48	174	123	239	56 (5-11) 34 (12-17)	92%	452
2/19/22	Concord Event Center	IDOH	54	95	90	5	124	63 (5-11) 52 (12-17)	92%	244
3/19/22	Concord Event Center	IDOH	20	56	82	9	98	31 (5-11) 29 (12-17)	82%	167
4/30/22	NIHHC	IDOH, Heart City	6	12	29	11	33	8 (5-11) 6 (12-17)	74%	58
TOTAL COVID-19 VAXs GIVEN			969	733	495					2,197
TOTAL COVID-19 TESTS DONE						198				198
TOTAL SERVED										2,395



Pilar Velázquez, 7 years old, receives her first pediatric dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at NIHHC's COVID-19 clinic on January 22.



Upcoming Events:



Scan the QR code to make an appointment online!

- NIHHC COVID-19 Drive-thru Vaccination & Testing Clinics in NIHHC's Elkhart office parking lot
 - Saturday, July 9, 2022 - 1:00-5:00 pm
 - Saturday, August 6, 2022 - 1:00-5:00 pm
 - Pfizer vaccine: ages 5+ (first and second dose and booster)
 - Moderna vaccine: ages 18+ (first and second dose and booster)
 - COVID-19 tests

Scan the QR code above right to register online!



Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date on COVID-19 and to attend our "Pills of Knowledge."

- "Pills of Knowledge" weekly virtual classes, broadcast in Spanish via Facebook Live, every Tuesday, 5:00-6:00 pm, on NIHHC's Facebook page

Scan the QR code at right to find us on Facebook!

- Weekly radio health interventions, every Wednesday, 1:00 PM, on La Raza Radio station WKAM 1460