

November 2015

## Latinos in Rural America (LiRA) A Primer to Assist Cross Cultural Interactions

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### Recommended Citation

Prabhu, Sonia; Urrea-Espinoza, Jonathan; and Celli, Hannah, "Latinos in Rural America (LiRA) A Primer to Assist Cross Cultural Interactions" (2015). *Undergraduate Research and Community Engaged Learning*. Paper 2.  
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## **Defining Values for Latinos in Rural Ohio:**

**Family:** Devotion to the ‘familia’ or “family unit”, a tight knit unit that includes extended family.

**Language:** Preserving Spanish, their native language.

**Education:** Receiving an education as a means to a better life.

**Tradition:** Celebrating through ‘Fiestas’ and holidays.

**Food:** Sharing food and ‘la sobremesa’ or ‘table-talk’ after meals.

## **What Are Important Social Centers for Latinos in Knox County?**

**Spanish Mass:** Mount Vernon’s Saint Vincent De Paul Catholic Church offers Spanish Mass is offered the last Sunday of every month.

**The Harvest Crew:** Glen Hill Orchard Farms is almost exclusively comprised of Latinos.



Glen Hill Orchard Farm

**Mount Vernon Restaurant Fiesta Mexicana:** Fiesta Mexicana closes to the public several times a year to celebrate holidays and foster a sense of community among local Latinos.

**Kenyon College:** Kenyon College supports the scholarship and teaching activities of Latino professors. Adelante is a Kenyon student organization comprised of Bilingual students willing to assist families and institutions in Knox County with Spanish-English & English-Spanish translation (adelante@kenyon.edu).

**Salvation Army SAT Prep Courses:** Students from Kenyon College are offering SAT-prep courses geared towards bilingual students, taught in Spanish and English. The courses are held at the Salvation Army in Mount Vernon on Wednesdays and Fridays from 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm.

## **Challenges for Latinos in Knox County:**

**Language Barriers:** Difficulty speaking English may inhibit success in schools, businesses, and agencies. Students from Spanish-speaking households may face difficulty pursuing higher education due to a lack of bilingual SAT and ACT materials, and Eurocentric curricula.

**Limited Cultural Understanding:** Some Latinos feel isolated and find it difficult to engage with non-Latinos who do not understand their customs.

## **How Can You Better Engage With Latinos?**

**Utilize Spanish:** Latinos appreciate when others try to speak Spanish, even those not fluent in the language.

**Learn Communication and Norms:**

**Formal Greeting:** Latinos use *señor* (Mr.) and *señora* (Mrs.), plus the family name. Handshakes are often used at the beginning and end of an encounter.

**Informal Greeting:** Kissing between women and hugging (“*abrazo*”) among men is common once a strong relationship forms.

## **How Can Schools Better Accommodate Latino Students?**

Create translated flyers and bilingual materials for Spanish-speaking parents and students, incorporate works by Latino/a scholars into curricula, host ACT/SAT information sessions, and celebrate Spanish Heritage Month.

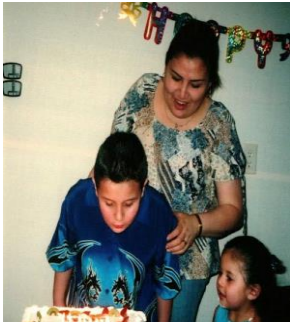


Daughter of a Puerto-Rican resident of Knox County

## Latinos in Rural America (LiRA) A Primer to Assist Cross Cultural Interactions

### Who Are Latinos?

Latinos are people living in, or from, countries in Latin America. Today, 10.5 million Latino children under 18 are living in the U.S., making them the fastest-growing youth population. Latinos see America as a place of economic and educational opportunity.



Family celebrating a birthday.

Latinos in Knox County: Nearly 800 Latinos live in Knox County. Most are from Mexico, are bilingual, and are devoted to preserving their culture.



Mexican visual art

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LiRA team with the owners and family of Fiesta Mexicana (Mexican restaurant) in Mount Vernon, Ohio.

*This project was made possible with support from Ohio Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Digital Scholarship program, the Mount Vernon–Knox County Community Foundation, and the Kenyon College Summer Scholars program.*

*Latinos in Rural America* was directed by Clara Román-Odio, professor of Spanish and director of the Latino Studies program at Kenyon College, and conducted in collaboration with Kenyon summer scholar Amelia Dunnell and summer research fellow Patricia Mota. Kenyon students, Hannah Celli, Jonathan Urrea-Espinoza and Sonia Prabhu, created this primer.

