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

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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.

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.

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

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**References:**

- Rindele, Susan, and Daniella Montoya. “Hispanic / Latino Identity Labels: An Examination of Cultural Values and Personal Experiences.”

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