

THE LATINO ROUND TABLE

For many years now, the Latino community in Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania has been growing, and along with it numerous organizations, both formal and informal, have sprouted. Recently, Latino leaders and others interested in the community's growth have come together to form the Latino Round Table ("LRT"). The LRT is an informal grouping of socio-economic, healthcare, religious, economic, educational and governmental organizations focused on enhancing the visibility of Latinos in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The group acts as a unified forum and conduit for its members and business/political stakeholders to understand and promote a cohesive Latino agenda in our region.

The Latino population in Southwestern Pennsylvania is the largest growing populous in our region. Its impact upon the health, economy, workforce and lifestyle is quickly increasing. Thus, the LRT is committed to coordinating various grassroots efforts to unite our community and enrich our local cultural and political sectors by creating an understanding of Latinos.

Latino Round Table Mission (as of Mar. 7, 2005)

We are a group that is interested in enhancing the visibility of the Latino Community in South Western PA by coordinating the efforts of the different Latino Organizations and Groups in our community. Our Goal is to unite the Latino Community so that it will progress and grow.

Somos un grupo interesado en realzar la visibilidad de la Comunidad Latina en el suroeste de Pennsylvania, coordinando los esfuerzos de diferentes organizaciones y grupos latinos en nuestra comunidad. Nuestra meta es unir a la Comunidad Latina para que progrese y crezca.

Organizations that participated in 2005

Governor's Advisory Commission for Latino Affairs (GACLA)
Pennsylvania Statewide Latino Coalition (PSLC)
Latino Catholic Community of the Diocese of Pittsburgh
Greater Pittsburgh Metropolitan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Center for Latin American Studies, University of Pittsburgh (CLAS)
SALUD (Students And Latinos United against Disparities)
Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh
SALUD para Niños (Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh)
Latino Health Advocacy Leadership (LHAL)
Latin American Cultural Union (LACU)
Pittsburgh Venezuelan Association
Hola! El Show de la Televisión
The Hispanic Center
The Partnership
PNC Bank
Concerned Latino individuals and businesses

What did we do between January and September of 2005?

- The LRT discussed demographics and social issues of the population, as well as the several Latino organizations in the area (Jan.)
- The LRT discussed our strengths and issues. (Feb.)
 - Important strengths are family support, creativity, and a growing interest of local Latinos to work the improvement of their own community.
 - Issues of general concern for the community are invisibility and lack of cohesiveness. They act together to make connecting with a network and finding information more difficult. Specific concerns are health (physical, social, mental, and dental as well as lack of insurance); immigration; education and English ability; jobs (wages, schedule, resumes), and; finances (credit, opening accounts, pay taxes). It became clear that the community, out of its family orientation, puts a great emphasis on the education of children and youth. Education is considered a holistic experience that includes not only academics, but also, very importantly, values and culture.
- The LRT developed a mission (see page 1). The LRT will not take up any particular issue that is already being addressed by other organizations. Rather, the LRT should offer a forum for such communication and coordination, because there is no other such forum. (Mar.)
- Members of the LRT met with Mr. John Denny, from the Hillman Company, to discuss our advances. (Mar.)
- The LRT decided to take at least one concerted action. This first action should be relatively non-controversial. Taking *one first concerted action* may facilitate taking more concerted actions in the future. (May)
- Options for a concerted action have been discussed throughout the months.
 - The LRT decided to invite mayoral candidates to discuss issues of interest to the Latino community. (May) First town hall meeting planned for Sep. 21
 - The LRT provided contact information of LRT organizations willing to work with the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), at the request of a WIC representative. This task was completed in a short time due to the LRT network.
 - The LRT made a calendar of Latino events for Hispanic Heritage Month, being updated every week. (Aug.)
 - The LRT decided to write a grant proposal that could serve all organizations. It will include some features that can empower the community (possibly some physical space for community meetings or classes, a resource room), a social worker, and secretarial support. Mr. Denny is interested in talking about partially funding it through the Hillman Foundation. (Feb. – Aug.)
 - Other items to be discussed are the: 1) develop an exhibit about the Latino population at the Heinz History Center; 2) coordinate mailings to State and local representatives to raise awareness of our presence here; 3) to obtain a physical space, such as a house, for community use; 4) create a website to feature all local Latino organizations, and; 4) explore options to create a soccer field. Some of these actions can be interrelated; some may be included in our proposal.
- To begin addressing the issue of visibility, the LRT obtained training in preparing a press release. Members compiled a list of media contacts and options to make business cards through the internet (for those who don't have work-related ones). The LRT began tracking all media reports about our community. (Jun.)
- The LRT discussed immigration issues. (Jul.)
- The LRT discussed working on a strategic plan, the proposal, the mayoral candidates meetings, and the calendar. (Aug.)