



THE CENTER *for*  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNDERSTANDING

*Learning from the world, serving North Carolina*

Latino Initiative



**Latino Initiative: Cabarrus, Rowan, and Union counties**  
**26 policy and civic leaders studied in Guanajuato, Mexico**  
September 18-24, 2006

**Goals:**

- Develop a multi-disciplinary network of leaders interested in investigating the challenges of incorporating immigrants into strong North Carolina communities
- Inform leaders of the challenges and achievements of Latinos in North Carolina and related service providing agencies
- Gain a deeper understanding of the cultural, political, social and economic issues impacting the decisions of Mexicans to come to NC and the life cycle experience of Mexicans who migrate and the families they leave behind

**Highlights:**

- Small group visits to a village heavily impacted by migration -- many men and women villagers of all ages have migrated to US in search of economic opportunity
- Visit to former mining town that is revitalizing itself through creative economic development projects
- Small group discussions with Mexican professionals who shared how law enforcement, education, health and political systems work in their country

**Participants' Voices:**

- "I will never forget the empty homes of sons/daughters working in the U.S...awesome and sobering."
- "Incredible experience. The pictures and stories I have encountered will remain with me for the rest of my life. While I may not be able to influence national or international policy, I will be able to make positive contribution to the lives of all citizens in my community."

**Serving North Carolina:**

- Creation of written and audio materials for Latinos to promote the access and understanding of the court process and the individual rights of both victims and those who are accused
- Collaborative work with the Latino community to provide information on parenting, readiness for school, cultural differences, community resources and the need for learning English
- Local elementary school, which has a majority of Latino students, has scheduled conversational Spanish classes for the school staff

**Thank You:**

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*The University of North Carolina*