



North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals
"Promoting Education among Hispanic Youth"

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press release

Dropout Prevention Program ¡Gradúate!, Continues in Alamance-Burlington School System Thanks to a Grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

September 2012 - Cary, NC. Thanks to generous funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the bilingual and bicultural Dropout Prevention Program ¡Gradúate! for Hispanic students continues after a successful pilot year in two high schools of the Alamance-Burlington School System. The program continues to be offered to Hispanic students in H.M. Cummings and Graham high schools in Alamance County. The program has the following goals: (a) to decrease the number of failed classes by Hispanic students; (b) to decrease Hispanic students' absenteeism from school; (c) to increase the students' GPA; and (d) to increase the graduation rate of Hispanic students.

The program began in February of 2011 as a result of a grant from the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention which expired after one year. The ¡Gradúate! Program is now being funded in large part by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was established in 1936 and funds projects that accomplish systemic reform and have North Carolina-wide impact. It is because of this funding that the Hispanic students of Alamance-Burlington School System can continue to receive personal assistance in achieving their academic goals and personal dreams.

The ¡Gradúate! Program has allowed the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals to expand its direct educational services and to contribute to decrease the dropout rate among Hispanic students in our State. It offers in-school services such as one-on-one coaching, engages Hispanic parents in the academic well-being of their children, and provides after-school services in the form of Life Skills training and tutoring. "The importance of keeping this program alive is monumental. Students in just one year have come to rely on their coaches and the services they provide and have been inspired to pursue education that will result in concrete careers." said Marco A. Zárate, President and Co-founder of NCSHP.

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was established in 1936 as a memorial to the youngest son of the founder of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. In its history, the Foundation, as the beneficiary of the income from the Zachary Smith Reynolds Trust and the W.N. Reynolds Trust, has now made grants totaling more than \$493 million to recipients in all of North Carolina's 100 counties. The foundation currently gives attention to certain focus areas: community economic development; the environment; strengthening democracy; pre-collegiate education; and social justice and equity.

The North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals is a statewide 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to promote education among Hispanic youth. Acknowledging the under representation of Hispanic youths in higher education, and seeing the need for role models, it is the intent of the NCSHP to develop and secure educational opportunities and financial support to improve Hispanic youth's success and school performance. The NCSHP is committed to doing the best it can to nurture our youth and provide resources to Hispanic students and their families, so that they can succeed in education.

For more information about the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals please visit our website at www.TheNCSHP.org or contact us at (919) 467-8424 or at mailbox@TheNCSHP.org