

# IMPACT

University of Idaho  
Extension

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## Junior Master Gardener Latino Expansion Pilot Program Brings New Experiences!

### *The Situation*

Junior Master Gardener™ (JMG) is a program for youth of all ages that uses fun activities to teach horticulture and environmental science concepts, using the experiential learning model where youth learn by doing. Currently, there are five registered JMG clubs in eleven counties throughout Idaho. Over 18,000 youth and 700 adults have been involved in the program since its inception in 2002. In Idaho the JMG pilot has reached over 950 Latino youth in 2006 and 2007.



In 2005 an informal survey conducted by the Idaho 4-H Office of 52 Latino individuals ranging from age 15-24 suggested that 79% of the respondents had not participated in a 4-H club or program. Thus, the District II 4-H Youth Development Committee has identified meeting the needs of Latino youth as one of its highest priorities for the 2004-2009 periods.

Spanish JMG resources are being made more available in Idaho in order to train Latino teachers and parents to become certified JMG facilitators. Also, this pilot program funded by UI Extension Urban Grant aims to increase the awareness of important Latino health issues such as diabetes, exercise, and healthy eating habits.

### *Our Response*

To meet these needs in the Latino community a focus group was conducted to guide the work of the program. Bilingual JMG programs were delivered to provide appropriate instruction for Latino youth, making experiences more rewarding and meaningful, as well as guaranteeing longer retention of the information. In addition, three Latino JMG facilitators Jose Aguilar, Bea Murphy and Graciela Fitzgerald and two Latino youth, Holly and Hannah Murphy provided leadership to the JMG expansion effort.

In 2006, partnerships were formed with the Hispanic Cultural Center of Idaho, Boys and Girls Clubs, Nampa and Boise School Districts, and Padres Unidos. The Agricultural and Extension Education Department in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, The Idaho State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs and Edwards Greenhouse, Boise contributed to this educational effort. In 2007, the program fostered new alliances with Centro de Comunidad y Justicia, the Bilingual Education Student Association at Boise State University, Wells Fargo, the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce, La Prensa Libre, and Idaho Unido. A budding relationship with the newly formed Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is underway for 2008.

### *Program Outcomes*

In 2007 the pilot delivered six programs. The first program was the Hispanic Health Disparities Conference, presented by the Idaho Partnership for

Hispanic Health Project. This was a four hour program on one Saturday in April, reaching almost 40 youth. Participants made Far-out Bird Feeders and became more aware of the birds that are native to this area and the interconnectedness of humans and animals. In order to measure outcomes, youth created a **KWL** chart where they listed what they **Know** already about wildlife in this area, **What** they wanted to learn more about and finally what they **Learned**. We used resources from Project Learning Tree with information about native Idaho bird species to learn more.

The next program was at Cinco de Mayo in Nampa. Nearly 200 youth planted Clean Air Neck Pets. They filled used film canisters with soil, added grass seed and watered their pet. They discovered the symbiotic relationship of oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange between plants and people.

In June, September and October Fiesta de Salsa workshops were held for families at the Hispanic Cultural Center by the JMG team. In the workshops participants learned about the six plant parts we eat and the differences (social and botanical) between fruits and vegetables. They also became more aware of different herb fragrances and how they can enhance the flavor of a dish. Each participant created their own fresh salsa to take home.



*Three participants display their salsa creations.*

For the second year JMG was offered as a part of a Summer Migrant School Program in the Nampa School District. For 90 minutes a week, over a 4-week period, thirty fourth graders did activities from the JMG Health and Nutrition curriculum. These lessons provided participants with greater awareness of important health topics related to Latinos that included: obesity, making healthy snack choices, reading food labels and diabetes.

Youth increased awareness, skills and competency in nutrition, gardening and health while doing fun “hands-on, minds-on” JMG activities. They each planted a bean seed donated by Harris Seeds, which they observed each week and transplanted to take home upon completion of the program.

### **Summary**

This is the second year for the Latino Expansion Program. We continue to offer fun and educational activities with targeted Latino youth groups and families in both Ada and Canyon Counties.

JMG Summer Migrant School exposes Latino youth to 4-H, helps the school district meet USDA nutrition goals and teachers to meet Idaho health standards. Maintaining and forming strong alliances and partnerships with schools, community leaders and parents remains one of the central goals of the pilot. We have provided training scholarships to six individuals willing to be JMG program facilitators to ensure sustainability after the final year of the pilot. VISTA volunteers have taken the lead in managing the pilot in partnership with 4-H, UI Extension and this program partners.

In year two we focused on programs targeted at families rather than just individual Latino youth. These programs gave parents and other adults a chance to experience the JMG program first hand and become involved. We had great feedback from families and are looking forward to implementing similar family efforts, a bi-lingual Master Gardener training and JMG facilitator trainings with Latino partners for 2008.

### ***For More Information***

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