These last few weeks have been some of the most challenging and scariest times in my life. I imagine many of you share my sentiments. It’s made me see how as a society we’re being forced to change the norm of how we go about our day to day. It’s reminding me that life can change from one day to the next without a choice. It didn't feel right to continue our newsletter speaking only about our programs and services when the world around us feels so unsure. I wanted to dedicate this issue to bringing awareness to our immigrant Latino community about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how we as a community can protect ourselves, our families, and our community.

Coping with Stress and Anxiety?

The outbreak of coronavirus disease may be stressful. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. Here are some recommendations from CDC:

- Avoid hearing about the pandemic repeatedly.
- Take care of your body! Take deep breaths, meditate, exercise regularly. Try to eat healthy, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Yes, Voces Latinas was forced to work remotely for the safety of our staff and clients. Many of us have compromised immune systems so our first priority is to stay safe. Although remote services is new to Voces Latinas, our amazing and very talented team has learned quickly. Our services continue uninterrupted. Please check out our social media for updates and contact information on programs.

I wish everyone well and ask that you please stay inside as much as you can. I know it's difficult to do as many have multiple jobs and responsibilities, but as a community who holds family to the highest value, let's work together, let's stay inside, spend quality time with the family, and stay well.

Nathaly Rubio-Torio Executive Dir.
For the fifth consecutive year, Holatinos continues to raise awareness among gay and bisexual men between the ages of 18 and 29. It promotes the importance of safer sex to reduce the number of HIV positive diagnosis and high risk behaviors through social and educational activities. The group began 2020 with a whole new image and plans to reach more young Hispanics.

Néstor Ardila, Holatino’s Coordinator, spoke to Las Voces about the group’s development and the hundreds of young men who have taken part in this initiative.

**How did Holatinos begin?**

We were trying to create a program targeting the young gay community. We wanted to reach this population after noticing the high number of HIV among young Latinos, therefore, The MPowerment Project “Holatinos,” emerged to provide a safe and social space for new immigrant Latino young men who identified as gay, bi, MSM… etc, and could learn about prevention.

**Over the past 5 years, how has Holatinos evolved?**

We as facilitators have had the opportunity to identify the needs and concerns that this population faces. Although, at the beginning we knew the basic struggles, we quickly learned first hand the realities that our community lives every day.

**Holatinos is for young Men who need a second Family!**

Issues vary from being away from family, language proficiency and getting to know the city. Little by little we are developing activities around those needs, for example, we had a workshop about locations to visit in NYC for free activities, resources, and English classes.

**What are the issues addressed in Holatinos?**

In Holatinos we talk about sexuality, drug prevention, mental health, issues that concern the gay community but that many hesitate to talk about with their parents or even with friends. We address these issues in a professional and informal way. It is not a class, we simply reach young people and engage them in a pleasant conversation, always linking education, whether it’s through a game or other activity, but we always put effort to make it appealing and interesting.

It’s been five years, what does it represent to Voces Latinas?

Wow! Change!!! growth and inclusion. Voces Latinas opened this door and will never be closed to anyone. We are here and will always be for those who are in need.

**What are the goals for 2020?**

Definitely exceed the standards, go beyond what we have accomplished til now. This 2020, we would like to focus on community work and create more sense of identity among the participants; beyond socializing we want to empower young men so they can benefit from their own community.

**What would you say to young people who may be interested in joining the group?**

Holatinos is for young men who need a second family, especially for those who just arrive to New York. Each and every member of the group has a lot to offer to new participants, a warm welcome, guidance and support. By Érica Vallejo
My name is Ivettlisse I am 35 years old, I am from Venezuela, a year ago I decided to leave my country after being victim of sexual abuse, that was added to the political crisis in Venezuela.

I came to New York where I started working as a Bartender. Every week members of Voces Latinas went to the bar to do workshops base on sex education due to the environment to which women like me are exposed. I remember that once they discussed PrEP and its benefits, even one of the participants stated that he would start using it because he would go on vacation and possibly have sexual partners whose HIV status would be unknown to him. That's when I thought: "I don't have a stable partner, PrEP is for me"

I use PrEP since then, it has been the best choice to keep me protected, remember, PrEP is also for women.

What is PrEP?

PrEP is a daily pill that prevents HIV.

Is PrEP for everybody?

PrEP is for men and women who do NOT have HIV and:
- Have sex with people whose HIV status is unknown.
- Have a sex partner with HIV.
- Share needles.

How effective is PrEP?

Reduce the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99%.

Does PrEP prevent ETS?

PrEP DOESN'T prevent other Sexually Transmitted Infections STDs, use condoms along PrEP to avoid STDs.

You can get PrEP from your health care provider or through Voces Latinas, call us (917) 244-4844 or send us an email adiaz@voceslatinas.org
Free! Manualidades Workshop!
Hispanic women from different ages are welcome

Every Saturday from 2:30 to 5:30 in the afternoon, Latinas of different ages come together to create arts & crafts like crochet, holiday cards, costume jewelry and more. Topics of interest are discussed while enjoying delicious snacks and a cup of coffee among friends and peers. In essence it's an art therapy group for many women.

The "Manualidades" workshop has been active for 15 years, of which 8 of them have been lead by Angélica Perea, a peruvian immigrant, promotora who has provided her experience, knowledge and valuable time to create a positive impact in our community. This group has become an ongoing opportunity for a diverse group of Latinas to socialize, seek help and spend their free time. Kids are also welcome.

Register to VOTE

New York residents can register to vote online through the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) website. You will need a valid NYS driver license, permit, or non-driver ID as well as the last four digits of your social security number to begin.

voterreg.dmv.ny.gov/MotorVoter/

MAC AIDS Fund
AIDS Institute

ViiV Healthcare
NYC Council

New York Presbyterian

One City Health Innovation Fund

Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation

Register now!
‘WILLOW’, HIV+Women Free Workshops

- Empowerment sessions
- Healthy vs. Unhealthy relationships (workshops).
- Sexual Health Services
- Stress Reduction Techniques

Emedina@voceslatinass.org

Oxígeno salon and barber shop has joined Voces Latinas as a community educator in HIV prevention. This venue will provide accurate information and will refer clients to VL for testing, PrEp, Pep and additional services.

Thank you for believing in us!

Mramirez@voceslatinass.org

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