

CLASS 135: PSJA, Edinburg, Lyford, Harlingen Region 1 ESC

Experience in Democracy Leadership Program

Training Week: July 11—July 17, 2004

July 18, 2004

In Search for Change, Migrant Youth Express Their Concerns to Capitol Hill Leaders

WASHINGTON, DC, On July 17, 2004, twenty-seven students from South Texas, successfully completed a leadership training week with definite plans to make change in their local communities. The Bert Corona Leadership Institute's civic leadership program provided the students with the practical insight of their role in government.

The students of Class 135 were quick to realize that possessing the skills and know-how of civic participation is half the battle toward achieving change in a democratic society. The students were challenged and tested to enable them to accept the civic responsibilities that lie ahead.

The main objective of the Experience In Democracy Leadership Program is to provide a sense of empowerment and become effective leaders. The training encompasses teaching the values of democracy, building and refining leadership

skills, and entrusting them with the duty of civic engagement.

Class 135 participants were able to learn the practical mechanics of public policy. They developed their own issues agenda and diligently prepared a persuasive argument for their proposals.

After their rigorous training sessions, Class 135 met with members of the offices of U. S. Representatives Solomon Ortiz, Ruben Hinojosa, Lloyd Doggett and Senators Kay Bailey Hutchinson and John Cornyn. Each meeting was a success, as Class 135 took advantage of the opportunity to implement their newly acquired skills.

The students of Class 135 showed much resolve in their newfound dedication to make a difference. They recognize civic responsibility as a call that they must answer.

Student participation in this institute was made possible by the following sponsors: Roberto Garcia-Edinburg CISD
Feliciano Garcia-Lyford ISD
Gloria Gutierrez-PSJA CISD
Amalia Ochoa Garcia-Harlingen CISD



Meeting with Senators Kay Bailey Hutchinson

Class 135 organized themselves into a Texas Student Network named La Familia Ayudando Familias before the end of the training week. The goal of Familia Ayudando Familias is to provide assistance to newly immigrant and migrant families in their communities by offering food, clothing and other necessities. The young leaders from Class 135 expect to return to their communities and build relationships with local restaurants, and clothing stores to accomplish their mission. They elected one of their youngest class members President of the Network to lead this new venture.

Congratulations Graduating Class 135!

Amelia Cervantes
Armando Cardenas
Andres Felix
Ilse Vela
Mario Costilla
Jesus Gonzalez
Derrick Martinez
Leslie Limas

Gerardo Chavero
Andres Salazar
Nancy Felix
Elio Gonzalez

Samuel Suarez
Ninfa Garza
Ricardo Hernandez

Rogelio Flores
Juan Anaya
Lucy Gudino
Aleida A. Garza

Dionicio Rodriguez
Sandra de la Rosa
Lizbeth Cantu

Tania Nogueira
Francisco Cepeda
Jessica Rivera
Marissa I. Garcia

Ruby Lira
Alicia Martinez

Issues Agendas: Class 135 Pharr-San Juan-Alamo, Edinburg, Harlingen, Lyford TEXAS

These issues, concerns and proposed solutions were developed by EIDLDP Class 135. Their purpose is to make a difference in their community and make their community a better place.

We are students representing Pharr-San Juan-Alamo, Edinburg, Harlingen and Lyford school districts in the state of Texas. We are here today to discuss issues affecting our community and we propose the following:

Drugs

Drugs are a huge concern in our communities. There should be harsher sentencing. In the case of teenage offenders - they just receive Boot Camp.

Unemployment

Our community lacks job opportunities for people to be able to support their families. We propose to Congress to bring more businesses such as industry, factories, and restaurants to all of our small towns.

Pregnancy

There is a high rate of teenage pregnancy in our community. We need to enhance sex and health education to help young adolescents to prevent unplanned pregnancies and stop the spread of HIV.

Education

Learning is like a vital organ: We all must learn. We feel that teachers should be better qualified and supportive of students. We propose to Congress that more money be invested in schools and after school programs.

Health Care

Many people are denied health care because of their income. We propose to Congress to work on providing health care for everyone in need.



Meeting with Congressman Solomon Ortiz



Meeting with Congressman Ruben Hinojosa