



Teen Art Exhibit and Benefit Helps Change Troubling Facts about Teen Suicide

One in five Latina teenagers considers or attempts suicide

Denver, Colorado May 12, 2010. Hispanic female high school students in grades 9-12 reported a higher percentage of suicide attempts than their White, non-Hispanic or Black, non-Hispanic peers according to the Center for Disease Control. These alarming national statistics indicate that Hispanic highschool girls are most likely to seriously consider and attempt suicide. Latina youth in West Denver are no exception.

Voz y Corazón – meaning voice and heart – is a suicide prevention and mentoring program that aims to change these statistics by changing how Latina youth think and feel about themselves. “These girls often report not knowing “how to be”. They do not feel quite accepted by the majority culture and yet they are different enough from their home culture that they don’t feel that they quite belong there either,” says Lydia Prado, PhD, Director of Cultural Competency at the Mental Health Center of Denver and Voz y Corazón program director. “It’s a challenge for these young women to develop a solid bicultural identity wherein all parts of themselves are valued and celebrated, where their heritage is honored as a strength and their joining with mainstream culture is supported.”

Voz y Corazón is a free, culturally responsive support, education, and prevention program designed for Latina youth. It teaches them how to recognize and respond to signs of suicide in themselves and their peers. Caring volunteers – local artists and community members - mentor the teens and help them with self-expression through artwork and with developing a healthy bi-cultural identity . Girls are trained as ‘gatekeepers’ in order to support their peers who may be in trouble. One teen says her reason for being in the program is, “because I have many friends that need help and do drugs and try suicide. I want to help them.”

Voz y Corazón Teen Art Show and Benefit gives teens involved in Voz y Corazón a chance to showcase their art work and creativity. The teen's art work is professionally displayed at the Red Line Art for viewing and certain pieces will be available for purchase. The public is invited. Food, drink, music and a silent auction are planned. More details on the **Voz y Corazón Teen Art Show and Benefit** can be found at www.mhcd.org or by calling Lisa Jameson at 303-504-6725.

What: Voz y Corazón Teen Art Show and Benefit

When: Saturday, June 12, 2010

Time: 5:30-10:30pm

Where: Red Line Art - 2350 Arapahoe Street Denver, Colorado 80205

Solera Bank and Access Behavioral Care have generously sponsored the Voz y Corazón Teen Art Show and Benefit.

Voz y Corazón is a collaboration of the Mental Health Center of Denver, Girls, Inc., Sisters of Color United for Education, Lowry Family Center, Denver Health and Denver Public Schools.

The Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) provides extensive and accessible mental healthcare and substance abuse treatment, housing, education and employment services to people of all ages in the City and County of Denver. A private, non-profit organization, its mission is enriching lives and minds by focusing on strengths and recovery.

MHCD is recognized as a national center of excellence in mental healthcare because of its many innovative approaches to treatment and measuring results. MHCD provides services in 37 locations, has therapists in 18 public schools and clinical staff in 3 homeless shelters and 3 youth centers. Last year, the Mental Health Center of Denver served 13,600 adults, children, and families. Visit www.mhcd.org to learn more.

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