

Fitting IN: Assimilation Processes in South Bend

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Project

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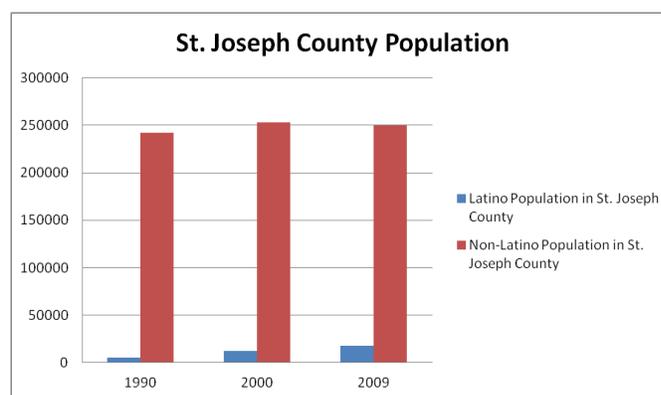
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By the 1960s, a Mexican community was well-established on the west side of South Bend. With the formation of this community came a market for local Mexican restaurants, grocery stores, and shops. Today, there are many such locally owned businesses that employ Mexican immigrants. Many Mexican immigrants also work in service, manufacturing, and farming industries today. The recent economic crisis has caused some immigrants to leave South Bend in search of work elsewhere, but the Mexican population has continued to rise despite this resettling trend. Figure 1 shows the increase in the Latino popula-

tion in St. Joseph County over the last twenty years. Since the 1960s, the total population in South Bend has decreased in almost every census. In the last twenty years, the non-Latino population of St. Joseph County (shown in red in the chart below) has remained fairly stagnant, but

the Latino population (in blue) has steadily increased. The Latino population has grown even more rapidly in some nearby counties. In Elkhart County, for example, the Latino proportion of the population has increased from 8.9% in 2000 to 15.1% in 2009.



Latino population of St. Joseph County relative to the county's non-Latino

Demographics on the Westside

Latinos make up a significant portion of the population in St. Joseph County (6.5% in 2009), and it is unlikely that the presence of Latinos and Mexicans in South Bend will diminish in the near future. Because Mexicans make up a significant portion of the population, understanding their culture, lifestyle, motivations, and demographics is important. Mexicans in South Bend influence all aspects of life in South Bend ranging from housing and education to health care and religiosity. Aside from studying Mexicans in South Bend, due to the sheer number of Mexicans living there, it is important to study

what they do in the community and how they adjust to it. Knowing what resources are most helpful, and knowing in which areas South Bend lacks resources, could help South Bend to become a more welcoming place for immigrants. Awareness of the issues surrounding immigration in South Bend will also allow for greater compassion among members of the South Bend community, for a deeper knowledge of the social, economic and cultural changes in South Bend, and for more informed policy decisions.

Immigrants in South Bend

Latinos have been coming to South Bend for several decades. However, the number of foreign-born Latino residents in South Bend has not followed a steady pattern.

St. Joseph County saw its greatest increase in its foreign-born Latino population between 1990 and 1999 when about 3,000 foreign-born Latinos came to South Bend, which was a dramatic increase from previous decades. From 2000-2008, the number of new foreign-born Latinos decreased to about 2,000.

'70s and '80s with a peak in the '90s and early 2000s. As immigration laws became more restrictive in the early 2000s and the economy took a downhill shift in the later 2000s, fewer foreign-born Latinos chose to come to South Bend. Of the Latino population in South Bend, 69% are U.S.-born, 6% are citizens by naturalization, and 25% are non-citizens (see chart).

The age distribution of the Latino population is also noteworthy. Among the foreign-born population, there is a peak in the 30-40 year-old population. This shows a

difference from a normal age distribution for a population, which would be concentrated at the youngest age groups and would taper as age increased.

This indicates either that many 30-40 year olds have migrated recently to South Bend or that there was a previous influx of migrants who have now reached 30-40 years of age.

The Latino population is also unique in its household structures.

Whereas only 36-39% of white households in St. Joseph County consist of a married couple with children under 18 years old, 57-68% of Latino households con-



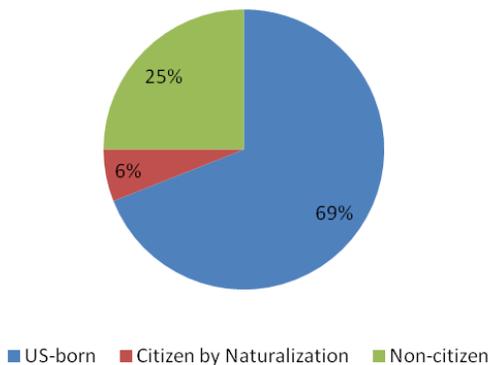
sist of a married couple with children under 18 years of age. On the other hand, 27-29% of white households consist of a married couple with no children under 18 and only 4-9% of Latino households consist of a married couple with no children under 18.

In St. Joseph County, Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to work in occupations involving services, sales and office administration, production, transportation, material moving, construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair. They are less likely to work in management, professional, and related occupations, along with farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.

In terms of income and poverty rates, Latinos in St. Joseph County tend to fare better than the Black population but worse than the White population.

The high school graduation rates for Latinos in South Bend are at 63%, which is below Indiana's average of 69.8%.

Citizenship Status of Latino Population in South Bend



Total Latino population for St. Joseph County by citizenship status. 69% of Latinos in St. Joseph County are US-born, 25% are non-citizens, and 6% have become citizens through naturalization (US Census Bureau).

These migration trends likely reflect the job opportunities and the economy of South Bend. Opportunities were increasing for migrants throughout the

Project Focus and Methodology

Our goal is to examine how Mexicans (and other Latinos) adapt to living in South Bend. We will define several key terms that relate to the processes of immigration and will then look at several ways in which Mexicans seek to adapt to the South Bend community. As part of this exploration, we will provide an in-depth explanation and analysis of the

English as a New Language classes that are run through La Casa. The classes are taught by Notre Dame students who are members of the Community Alliance to Serve Hispanics. We will also look at differences in the gender, family, and social roles in the United States and Mexico. Our project will then concentrate on other ways in which peo-

ple adapt to South Bend. We will discuss the South Bend Juvenile Correction Facility and the youths who live there as well as the programs they participate in. Finally, we will conclude with a discussion of the extent to which Mexicans in South Bend can successfully balance taking on the South Bend culture while retaining their own Mexican identity.

Terms Associated with Immigration

Studying Mexican immigration comes with its own set of jargon, completely necessary before any further understanding is possible. In order to make assessments about life in Indiana for Mexican Immigrants, it is crucial to comprehend some of the major terms that surround the study of Mexicans finding and getting used to a new home.

Acculturation - “Cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture; also : a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact.” In this particular case, it results from the Mexican immigrants adjusting their own culture enough so they can survive in every fact of life in a new area.

False Cognates - (Spanglish)- “There are literally thousands of words that are the same or similar in appearance in English and Spanish, and have the same meaning in both languages (“cognates”). There are also, however, many instances where appearances are deceiving and words that look alike are quite different in meaning (“false cognates”).” False cognates come about when two languages combine very rapidly, in the cases of one nation yielding high immigration numbers from another nation. As the two are in close, quick interaction, the human brain finds convenience in using the two simultaneously. False cognates let immigrants use both of their languages to verbally communicate in their new one.

Immigrants- “A person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.”

Migrant- A person who moves regularly in order to find work, especially in harvesting crops.

Emigrants- “One who leaves a country to take up a permanent residence.”

Assimilation - “the process of receiving new facts or of responding to new situations in conformity with what is already available to consciousness”

Enclaves - “a distinct territorial, cultural, or social unit enclosed within or as if within foreign territory.”

La Casa de Amistad

One way in which Mexican immigrants adapt to their new home in the United States is through participating in local outreach programs. One such program, La Casa de Amistad, has been operating in South Bend since 1973 when it was founded by Father John Phalen to respond to the needs of Hispanic teenagers in South Bend. Since then, La Casa's services have increased to cover a variety of needs of Hispanic youths and adults. Their mission statement is "to empower the Latino/Hispanic community within Michiana by providing educational, cultural and advocacy services in a welcoming, bilingual environment." La Casa does this in several ways. First, they provide adult educational programs that enhance the skills of the adults and in turn develop a stronger community. Secondly, La Casa

provides youth programs that promote good study habits and encourage students to stay in school even through college. Finally, La Casa provides an abundance of services that enrich families' lives and create a positive change in their home, work, and community. (For a complete list of the services that La Casa offers, see the table below). Many of the programs put on by La Casa are free or discounted for participants. United Way funds many of La Casa's programs, and La Casa must reapply for this funding every year. Additionally, many organizations in South Bend partner with La Casa to provide funding, volunteers, services, or resources for La Casa's programs.



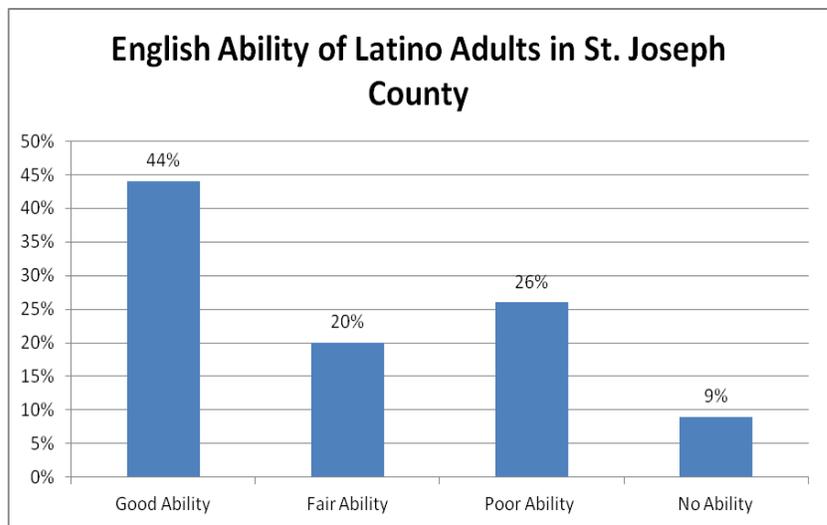
Volunteers help to paint the symbolic mural on the side of the building at La Casa de Amistad. Photo is courtesy of the Institute for Latino Studies.

<p>Education/ Literacy</p>	<p>For Adults Computer Classes GED Preparation in Spanish ENL/ ESL Classes U.S. Citizenship Classes Financial/Budgeting Classes</p> <p>For Youths Pre-K- reading readiness (Yo Puedo Leer) After school/Tutoring Program Youth Leadership LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) Spanish Classes</p>
<p>Healthy Living</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Families • Mariposas Group • Food Pantry • Pre-natal Exams & Education (San Joseph Regional Medical Center) • Blood pressure/Blood sugar screening (San Joseph Regional Medical Center) • Nutrition Classes (PURDUE Extension) • Dental Screening at La Casa (The Dental Center)
<p>Social Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration Services • Notary & Translations • Letters to Travel • Christ Child Referrals • General information and Referrals

English as a New Language

One of the specific focuses of La Casa is to increase literacy and to improve the skill sets of the Latino adults in South Bend. One way in which La Casa has been working toward this goal is through their English as a New Language (ENL) classes. Only 44% of Latino Adults in St. Joseph County have a good English ability and 20% have a fair English ability. The remaining Latino adults have either a poor English ability or no English ability (see graph on right). The ability to read, write, comprehend, and speak English is helpful in many aspects in the lives of Latinos living in South Bend. English is important to obtain a job, complete daily tasks, increase one's confidence in operating in a community, and to communicate with coworkers, church members, and people in other organizations. La Casa's free ENL program helps Latino adults to learn English, which in turn can help them to succeed in these endeavors.

students and teachers, organize pre- and post-tests, coordinate text book purchases, and report to La Casa. For the first couple of semesters as coordinator, Felix advertised the classes through posters, flyers, and the Latino radio station in South Bend. Recently, the classes have relied on word-of-mouth advertisement, which has also been effective.



English ability of Latino adults in St. Joseph County from 2006-2008 (according to US Census data and calculations in Goshen College's *Latinos in North Central Indiana* series).

History

La Casa's ENL class has existed for the last 12 years. The location and format of the class have changed to match the demands and needs of the students. 2011 marked the first year that the class has been held in its current location, the Marycrest Building on Western Avenue. The building was formerly a Singer factory but has since been converted into office space. La Casa rents the third floor of the building and uses it for several classes. The coordinator of the ENL program, Felix Marque, said that the new location has been good for the program. The increase in space and resources has contributed to retaining students.

As coordinator of the ENL program, Felix has several responsibilities. He must recruit

The Teachers

All teachers for the ENL program are volunteers. Some of the volunteer teachers are from the South Bend community and have expressed interest to La Casa or Felix about teaching a class in order to acquire the position. However, the majority of the teachers and all of the childcare volunteers are Notre Dame students in the student group Community Alliance to Serve Hispanics (CASH). CASH was founded in 1991 and won the Club of the Year award in 2001. According to Destin Whitehurst, former president of CASH, the group used to participate in a wide range of activities in the South Bend Hispanic community including a mentorship program, tutoring, GED instruction, and translation services. Now, Destin

English as a New Language (continued)



said, “we focus on what we do best,” that is, on English instruction.

The Students

At the beginning of the semester, each of the approximately 40 students takes an English achievement test. This test is scored in order to have a general idea of which of the five class levels would be most appropriate for each student. Felix also meets with the students to see which level they would prefer to take. Some people feel more comfortable in a level lower than what they tested, and others test poorly and would prefer the challenge of a higher level. Ultimately, Felix and each student decide which level will be best. The students are again tested at the end of the semester. The tests are used to show marked improvement, which helps with planning an effective curriculum and helps La Casa to obtain funding for the program.

The Classes

After the students have been divided into the five levels, regular classes begin. The class meets Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6:00 until 8:00. Each class is usually taught by two Tuesday teachers and two Thursday teachers. (Sometimes these roles overlap). The teachers outline a teaching plan at the begin-

ning of the semester and meet regularly to plan lessons and prepare for class. The abundance of teachers allows the students to receive a significant amount of one-on-one time with teachers, which can be especially beneficial for learning a new language. The students are also able to hear multiple native English speakers, which prevents a student from picking up a regional accent. Each of the classes incorporates speaking, writing, hearing, and reading English on a level that is appropriate yet challenging for the students in the class. Homework is given at the end of class to encourage students to use English outside the classroom.

The Rewards

After a semester of classes, the students again take an achievement test. The final meeting time of the semester consists of a celebration with a meal and an award ceremony. The students bring dishes to share. After eating, the teachers present participation certificates to all of their students with good attendance. The following semester, the process begins again with new students starting classes, with students from previous semesters advancing to higher class levels, and with all students advancing in their English proficiency.



“We focus on what we do best.”

Notre Dame student and four-year member of CASH Destin Whitehurst

Changing Family, Social, and Gender Roles

In a Mexican transnational community, loyalty to one's family, the formation and maintenance of *confianza* (trust), and the fulfillment of gender roles are essential aspects

for success in the community. Perceptions of various roles in Mexican transnational and immigrant communities are influenced by the United States, Mexico, religion, indi-

vidual families values, and the media. This article looks at how family, social, and gender roles differ between Mexicans in the United States and Mexicans in Mexico.

Family Roles

Devotion and loyalty to one's family plays out in many ways. For instance, sons and daughters of all ages obey and respect their parents. Grown children continue to value their parents' opinions and help out their elderly parents in whatever ways are fit.

Parents want what is best for their children and do everything in their power to ensure that their children live well.

A commitment to one's family does not apply only the nuclear family. Rather, Mexican families place a high importance on relations with extended family as

well. One way in which extended families show their commitment to one another is through working together to make the preparations and financial arrangements for fiestas.

For Mexicans in both Mexico and in the United States, these traditional communal family values are changing to various extents and being replaced by more individualistic outlooks. This plays out in trends such as the trend to have fewer children in whom you can invest more.



Confianza
 “signifies a cultural construct containing numerous factors, among them people’s willingness to be in a reciprocal relationship with one another.”
 Velez-Ibanex

Social Roles

An essential part of one's social life in a Mexican immigrant or transnational community is the concept of *confianza*, or trust, which can lead to the formation and maintenance of non-kin relationships. Strong social ties are seen as an important aspect in one's life and an indicator of one's status. Having a strong social network allows one to both share and receive warmth, intimacy, generosity, and stability.

Velez-Ibanex (2010) says that *confianza* designates mutual trust as well as intimacy and generosity. *Confianza* “signifies a cultural construct containing numerous factors, among them people’s willingness to be in a reciprocal relationship with one another” (Velez-Ibanex 2010: 44). Because of these numerous factors involved, *confianza* can exist in Mexican communities of any

socio-economic class and in any geographical location.

Confianza often plays out in the formation of *tandas*, which are systems in which a group of people contribute a set amount of money for a set amount of time and take turns receiving the pot of money. *Tandas* are important because they are one way in which people can establish relationships with non-kin. Because people in *tandas* agree to participate in them for a set amount of time, those who enter them know they will gain a relationship of mutual trust, intimacy, and generosity for at least the set amount of time.

Another way to gain social ties is to form a relationship in which at any given time, one of the members in the relationship is indebted to the other. In this type of relationship, if someone were to give you a gift, you

would be indebted to them. You would then give them an even better gift so that the debt switches hands, but is not lost.

These non-kin relationships not only provide moral support but can also help someone if they run into some unforeseen difficulty (financial or otherwise). Additionally, non-familial social connections kin can provide opportunities such as jobs or important information.

The importance of *confianza* and non-kin relationships is important for Mexicans both in Mexico and in the United States. These relationships can gain special importance in the United States because many immigrants migrate without their families. Non-kin relationships can fill some of the void that is left by separation from one's family.

Gender Roles

Gender roles influence the concepts of sexuality and marriage, as well as employment and independence. Gender roles are dependent on age and the moral and social attitudes of a society. Gender roles create expectations for dating, marriage, leisure time, and employment.

Traditionally, Mexican marriages were based on respect. A woman lived with her family under the care of her father until she married her husband and moved to his home, where she would be under his care. Women were expected to resist marriage, and once they were married, they were to give in to any of their husbands' wishes. Women had little autonomy and were responsible only for tasks around the home such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children. Women were confined to the private sphere and could not

leave without permission.

Men were expected to show *machismo*. A man had to be strong and not show weakness. He could not display emotions, unless they were of anger. A man could beat his wife and children to show that he is in charge. A man was also responsible for earning all of his family's income and for making financial decisions for the family.

Now, however, these ideas of men's and women's roles seem to be changing. Many Mexicans in both Mexico and in the United States see their values as different from the values of their parents (Hirsch 2003). Younger generations especially see themselves as having different gender roles and different rites of passage into adulthood.

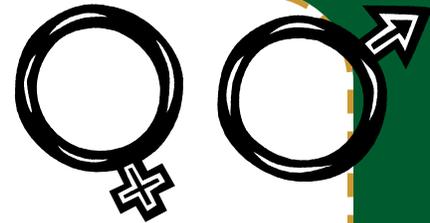
For these Mexicans, being a successful person involves entering into a companionate marriage

instead of a marriage based on respect (Hirsch 2003).

In a companionate marriage, the husband and wife are partners instead of the husband being superior to the wife. They share responsibilities and can have a greater level of intimacy.

For the husband, this type of marriage results in less economic stress, more shared decisions, and intimacy.

For the wife, this results in greater freedom and more opportunities to participate in public life. The possibility of the wife earning an income outside the home also comes into view.



Although there is great variability among Mexican immigrant and transnational communities, the broad qualities described above explain some of the key aspects of success. Although subtle differences exist in how those qualities play out in the United States and Mexico, and in older and younger generations, the qualities remain important in all contexts. Showing commitment to one's family, forming *confianza* among acquaintances, and fulfilling an appropriate gender role marks the success of a person in a Mexican immigrant

Churches, Doctors Offices

Outside La Casa, there are many other organizations on the western side of South Bend that helps as many people as possible with the resources they have to fully assimilate into a new city and a new life. There are three major distinct areas where this help comes from, and each are present in this particular ethnic enclave.

One arena where businesses work to aid the assimilation of immigrants to South Bend is social spaces, including but not limited to restaurants, bars, dance halls, grocery stores and the like. One example of this particular facet of social inclusion is found in El Paraiso, a small business located on Main Street that sells groceries with special attention to Mexican food for familiarity. These different

social spaces on the west side are each decorated with rooms for rent, homes to buy, people to call for goods that others are selling, advice on finances, and legal assistance. Keeping these social spaces social and interactive gives the Mexican population the chance to fully assimilate into a new culture with space to network and connect on their similar situation.



Medical Practices on the West Side



Another area of necessitated social services where there needs to be a direct connection for Mexican immigrants looking to assimilate with the South Bend community is through medicine and medical care. There are at least four health clinics, each boasting Spanish speaking employees to provide health care in the west-

ern neighborhoods. The health clinics on Western Street and Chapin Street, on the edge of the neighborhood and the Sister Maura Brannick branch off of the Saint Joseph County Regional Health Center, provide care especially for uninsured (therefore, most non-citizens) in the South Bend Area.

Church Services for Mexican Immigrants

The first area where this is possible is through religion in general, namely Saint Adalbert's Catholic Parish. At the corner of Olive and Huron Streets, the church provides many different services that allow the Mexican population the opportunity to find success in the United States and in their new lives in South Bend. They offer both private elementary education and religious education programs for the students who do not attend a private school, but their parents want them

to learn the mass in Spanish as their family practices it. They also offer a Spanish mass so that the newest (and often the oldest who have not learned English at all) members of the church are still able to find their spiritual outlet in a language that they understand. Saint Adalbert's also provides certain events and counseling services that are formulated directly to the needs of the immigrant population, fund raisers, organization immigration and economics classes so their members

find an easier time getting familiar with the area. Saint Adalbert's is one of many religious institutions that offers services to the immigrant community in the Westside community.



Case Study: Immigrant Youth and Violence

Many immigrants find their assimilation intertwined with criminal activity, particularly drug use and gang violence, psychologically debilitating standards, aggression, and they find themselves in trouble with the new code of laws in a new country, rather than adapting to it. Hispanics represent the lowest recidivism rate of all of the racial categories at the Indiana department of Correction. In July 2011, Hispanic males represented 6.6% of the population within the state’s juvenile centers. (“Fact Card”). In 2010, about 30.9% of Hispanic males in the juvenile center of South Bend returned to the facility after being released once. (“Recidivism Report”).

For these particular immigrants, there is a government institution that boasts good programs for turning convicted criminals into law

abiding citizens. Particular to Indiana, the State Department of Corrections, has both adult and juvenile facilities that serve another purpose than just encouraging lawful behavior by administering negative sanctions. They use programs to help these prisoners, including immigrant citizens, get their lives back on track.

These programs that promote change and better assimilation for those extreme cases of people who find it difficult to follow the laws of a new country, are better executed and more prominent at the juvenile centers. They are meant for young minds. The facility is supported by a state board that includes many local politicians, people who dictate the laws and who are responsible for enforcing them, including four different judges from different types of courts.

While the students are situated in their own alternative learning environment, there are comprehensive services to help parents, families, and guardians of incarcerated youth cope with the fact that their child will endure a difficult time, but will hopefully emerge from their programs as successful in the community and in the future. The documents are readily available in Spanish language editions for immigrant families to reap the same benefits as their English speaking neighbors in similar situations.

It outlines what options parents have in their child’s time at the facility and explains to them their rights in being a part of making the minor, particularly the Mexican-American minor, adjust to life in America as a law abiding citizen.



Photos were found online and used from Indiana Department of Correction

Correctional Program for Spanish Speakers

The Bienvenido Program

The Bienvenido program was created with the hope of supporting immigrant youth during their adjustment to a new school setting and community. It strengthens communication between adolescents and their parents through weekly interviews. The program helps immigrants process and come to terms with leaving their country helps one to adjust successfully to life in a new country. The program promotes adolescents becoming more involved in their school and community with six major components: positive thinking, time-management, stress-management, suicide prevention, self-discipline and fitting in. Art, dance, yoga and conflict resolution training are some things that have been used to stimulate discussion with the students.

Other Programs to Help SBJCF Boys

Employability Program: It prepares youth for the process of obtaining employment. The program will discuss goal setting, financial planning, employment resources, job conduct, interviewing, applications, resume development and professional appearance.

Gang Realities in Our World (GROW): It focuses on gang intervention and personal growth. This program was inspired by the book "Gangbusters" written by Lonnie Jackson. Students placed in this program are housed

together in the same unit and attend gang intervention groups to work on developing appropriate pro-social bonds, understanding appropriate role models, victim empathy, etc.

The Stay Sharp Substance Abuse Program: This program is a Coping skills technique program, along with motivational interviewing, drug education and a relapse prevention. The program's anagram, Stay Sharp is its organizing principle: S= Striving for Engagement

Alongside these support programs for the immigrant youths who have found themselves on the losing end of the assimilation process, they are fully supported by the state of Indiana with a full-time principal, teacher, and overall school environment. At the SBJCF, they have classrooms, teachers, and state-of-the-art technology pertinent to learning. They have posters on the walls with the parts of speech, and motivational messages bordering the ceilings. It looks like a standard third-grade classroom.

A meaningful education is one of the greatest tools for helping children succeed, and the SBJCF provides this opportunity. The students constantly carry their GED text books and reading material and actively talk about it with the tutors. Many expressed that the best part about being at the center has been the time and distance they have gotten away from their environments to focus on reading and studying and redirecting where their academic talents are.

Conclusion



Above Picture: Young students hang out outside the door of La Casa de Amistad. Photo courtesy of Notre Dame's Institute of Latino Studies and La Casa de Amistad.

Below Picture: The fenced in portion of the South Bend Juvenile Correctional Facility houses the inmates' organic garden that they maintain. Photo courtesy of the Indiana Department of Correction.



South Bend has a long history as a home for Latino immigrants. The first Latino immigrants moved to the area in the 1920s and worked on farms. As Latinos (including many Mexicans) settled into the area, many secured residences and provided support for their family and friends to join them in the South Bend area. As the economy in the United States shifted from farming to manufacturing, Mexican immigrants in South Bend found work in factories such as the Studebaker and Singer Sewing plants in South Bend.

Upon reaching a new country, the immigrant has a very important task with their new role: to assimilate. There are many different hardships that the immigrant can go through at this particularly difficult time in an often unforgiving environment. As many people immigrate to a particular area, namely the South Bend Westside neighborhood in this case, they form an ethnic enclave, complete with all the basics they need to attempt to find success in a new home. They have churches, social spaces, and schools to ease the process. La Casa de Amistad is a not-for-profit organization that works to help people assimilate successfully in South Bend by helping people find homes and jobs and other necessities in a new country. Sometimes the whole process of assimilation does not go smoothly and some of the members of the ethnic enclave find themselves particularly wrapped up in a lifestyle plagued by crime, often being gang or drug related. The South Bend Juvenile Correctional Facility takes in young boys from 8-18 who have been convicted of misdemeanor or felony crimes. They have programs set up specifically for Spanish speakers to teach them to reject recidivist tendencies and how to stay out of jail. The Hispanic population has the lowest recidivism rate at the South Bend center. For Both the positive and negative sides of assimilation, there are social institutions in place to help the Mexican population of South Bend have as easy as possible a time to adjust to live in a new city, a new economy, a new environment, and a new country with inextricable differences from their homeland.

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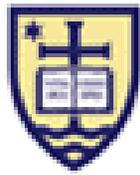
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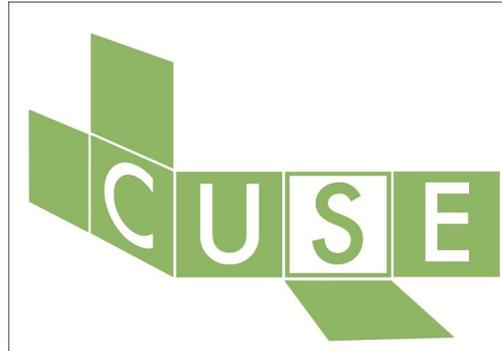
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