



Rape Prevention Education: How can we help Cape Cod?

Hispanic Heritage Month

According to a 2016 national telephone survey conducted by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 61 million adults identified as having some type of disability, which means that 1 out of 4 people have a disability in the U.S. When we look at the 2010 census, there are now 11.8 million Latinas/os who identify with some type of disability— the two most frequent disability types being mobility impairments and cognitive impairments. Although the Latinx community with disabilities is increasing, they have yet to position themselves and leverage their power in the public and private sectors.

Despite this prevalence of disability within Latina/o communities, disability is still stigmatized. Though Latinx pride themselves on caring for family to the point where they will not ask for help and will rearrange their entire lives to be of assistance, oftentimes disabled family members are hidden away, ignored, pitied, or patronized. Those who “improve” or “overcome” their disability are viewed as inspirations, perpetuating lowered expectations for others who are disabled. In general, many disabled Latinxs become dependent on their families for survival, especially if they are English-language learners. We find that, based on the perceived gravity of the disability, Latina/o families will almost always defer to the doctor as the expert and minimizes the person's internal desire to live as they choose.

Within this context, Katherine Perez and Michelle Garcia began engaging in a conversation about forming an organization to unite the disability community and the Latinx communities, two groups that often do not interact. The impetus to create the National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities (La Coalición Nacional para Latinxs con Discapacidades - CNLD) began in December 2015, when Perez, a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Chicago working on a student project, sought out Garcia, a community organizer at Access Living, a Center for Independent Living in Chicago, to brainstorm a way to bridge the two communities. Together, they decided to coordinate a conference in Chicago to bring together disabled Latinxs to talk about elevating the Latina/o disability community and the CNLD was born.

The mission of the CNLD is to work in solidarity to affirm, celebrate, and collectively uplift Latinxs with disabilities through community building, advocacy, protection of rights, resources, and education. They also mentor and support current and future disability activists/advocates, policy makers, and scholars who identify as part of the disabled Latinx community.

One of their latest accomplishments was to create a weekly webinar series entitled “Nosotros” the isolation and fears from the COVID 19 epidemic. They have covered such topics as mental health, immigration, the pandemic in Puerto Rico, parents with children with disabilities, siblings, science communication, ADA law and self care.

Recognizing Latinos with Disabilities

- **Christina Sanz**, the first Latinx with a disability to win an Emmy Award. You may recognize Ms. Sanz from her work in the A&E docu-series Born this Way.
- **Jeison Aristizábal**, a nonprofit founder with cerebral palsy, The nonprofit organization that he founded and runs helps to provide educational and medical support for kids who live in the same conditions that he grew up in.
- **Victor Pineda, PhD**, is the youngest government delegate with disabilities to have participated in the drafting of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He continues to work as a disability scholar and advocate.



Pictured above; Victor Pineda, PhD



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