

# Diverse Family Leaders: Making Progress and Showing You How!

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*“Well done  
is better  
than well  
said.”*

*Benjamin Franklin*

# HANDS & VOICES

FAMILY LEADERSHIP IN  
LANGUAGE & LEARNING (FL3)

## ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Transforming a Community for all  
Families with Children who are  
Deaf/Hard of Hearing



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# Lydia Hernandez



- IL Hands & Voices-Vice President
- IL H&V Guide By Your Side-Diversity & Equity Infusion Specialist/Bilingual Parent Guide
- Currently in H&V Leadership-to-Leadership (L2L) Program
- Mother to 4 girls- Yes, my husband is outnumbered!
  - Angie 20
  - Lynette 16 HOH
  - Isabella 12
  - Skylar 6

# A little about me...

- First generation Mexican American/oldest of 3 (and so it begins)
- Spanish was my first language
- Translating since 1986
- Health conditions



# Diversity & Equity Infusion- The What's, Why's, and How's

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- Lynette- Profound unilateral sensorineural hearing loss, TRAPS, Celiac
- Became GBYS family in 2010
- GBYS hiring and became GBYS PG in 2013
- 2 bilingual PG's
- Down to 1 bilingual PG...40+ families YIKES!
- GBYS began to grow...various roles still only ME for Spanish speaking families. No one knew how much I did.
- Began translating documents
- Offered Board VP position
- Andrea Marwah wrote a recommendation for H&V L2L Program
- **L2L- I AM A LEADER!**
- Spoke with our Coordinator; I have more to offer!

# What WE are doing

- What/whom we are addressing:
  - Military families
  - Amish communities
  - Underserved communities that are predominantly African American
  - More than Spanish speaking families
- Diversity trainings for our team
- Reaching out to CPS leaders (our largest school district in Chicago)

Why?  
Together  
we learn  
and grow!

- Why not?! It's been a long time coming
- Lots of considerations
- Hot Topic
- Our state has so much Diversity!
- Many cultures, languages, genders, etc.
- Deaf/HH is a culture too!
- Representation matters

# How do we accomplish our goals?

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- Meet bi-weekly with IL H&V GBYS Coordinator
  - Look for ways to effectively do this
- Reach out to other H&V Chapters/leaders
- Research how we can make an impact

Ex. Do we ask ourselves? Do we send someone within the same culture? Where do we start?

-Ongoing process



# Marbely Barahona

- Parent to 6 kids
- One – Profoundly Deaf
- and 5 with SELECTIVE hearing (family joke)
- An immigrant from Venezuela
- A very proud resident of the WHO DAT NATION... Go Saints!



# More about me..

- Bilingual Parent Guide, H&V Guide by Your Side Program -Louisiana
- Board Member of LA Hands & Voices
- Member of the LA EHDI Advisory Council
- Bilingual Parent Advisor for LA EHDI
- Member of H&V Headquarters Latino Council
- H&V Leadership-to-Leadership Program graduate



**“The function of leadership is to produce  
more leaders, not more followers”**

-Ralph Nader-

# **A potential leader ? Or just a desperate mother?**

- A life upside down by a diagnosis!
- What should I do? What resources did we have? Is Louisiana the right place for us?
- Denial, loneliness, overwhelming feelings, devastation, anguish, inadequacy, shame
- Do you speak Spanish? Can you help? Volunteering with local health systems
- Became a Parent Guide for LA H&V and EHDI

***The healing power of getting involved!***

***FINALLY!!***

# Un palo no hace Montaña!

## (A stick does not make a mountain)

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- 1 Spanish leader, 1 Arabic leader, but no African American leaders
- African American families are being served by the Spanish Leader
- **No representation for African American community and other populations**
- Where do we find new leaders?
  - School for the Deaf, Audiology facilities, word of mouth, social events, trainings, etc.

**Never underestimate a parent in need of resources and systemic changes!**  
**They become some of the best leaders!!**

## A work in progress...

- Consider recruitment during family trainings/monthly calls
- Ask potential leaders to become more involved
- Ask volunteers to become leaders
- Provide a welcoming, non-threatening, all-inclusive environment in which they feel safe to learn and grow
- Be open to new possibilities such as younger leaders, culturally diverse leaders, different races, different genders... **THE SURPRISE LEADERS!**

# Meet our newest Leader- Dinia Cabrera

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- **Not a complicated formula:**
  - Instilled confidence and empowered her
  - Made it known she was needed
  - Used every opportunity as a teaching moment
  - Encouraged education, preparation, knowledge
  - Started with small tasks and assignments
  - No meetings or trainings were too advanced, she was willing to participate
  - Established a trusting relationship with her!
- Did I say: **Trust!**
- Praise, applaud and share their accomplishments with others... **CHEER!**



“It is a curious thing, Harry, but perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it. Those who, like you, have leadership thrust upon them, and take up the mantle because they must, and find to their own surprise that they wear it well.”

**-J.K. Rowling Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows**



# Contact us

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