



HISPANIC CENTER
of western michigan

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4th Annual Bilingual College Fair Bridges Gap between Latino Families and College

GRAND RAPIDS, MI October 4, 2016 – The Hispanic Center of Western Michigan will be hosting its fourth annual Bilingual College Fair on October 13, 2016 from 6:30pm – 8pm at César E. Chávez Elementary. This event connects students and their families with over 25 local colleges and community organizations in a culturally-relevant event. The fair is free and open to the public.

“We want to create a ‘college-going culture’ in our community, and what better way than through a bilingual college fair,” says Rachel Lopez, director of youth and parent services. “It’s important for us to connect students with local colleges that care about our community and are able to support their diverse needs.”

This fair provides prospective first-generation Latino students with the information needed to choose the college that’s best for them. Angel Cruz, a 2015 attendee says, “This is our education and our lives, it’s important.” There are limited resources available in Spanish and English that provide Spanish-speaking parents with the knowledge needed to support their children.

In addition to college enrollment information there will be a community resource room with supportive services to ensure students get to and through college. Information includes scholarships, employment opportunities, wrap-around services, youth programs, and much more. There will also be raffle prizes and free popcorn.

For the first time, the Hispanic Center will be hosting a financial aid workshop during the college fair. Representatives from Grand Valley State and the Hispanic Center will facilitate the workshop. Students will be able to apply for their FAFSA pin, a required element to begin their application.

“Adding the FAFSA Workshop is an important piece to this year’s fair because the application process is beginning 3 months earlier than past years,” says Lopez. “The earlier application date will make it easier for students to weigh college options and choose what’s best for their family.”

Last year, over 120 students and parents attended the Bilingual College Fair. This year, the Hispanic Center is expecting even more. The Hispanic Center will be offering free YMCA day passes to the first 30 students that attend the Bilingual College Fair. Event registration information can be found at www.2016bilingualcollegefair.eventbrite.com.

Founded in 1978, the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan is a non-profit organization serving the needs of the Hispanic and the surrounding community. Located in Grand Rapids MI, the Hispanic Center serves over 11,000 clients per year. It offers youth & parent services, interpretation and translation services, and family support services. For more information please visit www.hispanic-center.org.

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