

Parent School Partnership ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



Founded in 1968, MALDEF is the nation's leading non-profit Latino legal organization. Often described as the "law firm of the Latino community," MALDEF promotes social change through advocacy, communications, community education, and litigation in the areas of education, employment, immigrant rights, and political access.

Alumni Success Stories:

Meet Margie Gonzalez from Idaho

Margie Gonzales has more than 30 years of experience in the state of Idaho working in diversity and community outreach. She is the Executive Director of the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs (ICHA), where she works with state government, community leaders, and national leaders, representing and advocating for the needs of Idaho's Latino population.



She has been with ICHA for twelve years and during her tenure has taken the lead in working toward educational, economic, social, legal and political equality with the focus on the needs of Hispanics.

Q: When did you begin your work with MALDEF's PSP and Train the Trainers programs?

A: We began bringing PSP to Idaho in 2006, training 20 community leaders at the first session. We have since trained over 65 leaders statewide who have in turn trained over 500 parents.

Q: Why is this work so important to the Commission and what results have you seen?

A: As a result of MALDEF's PSP program we hosted the first Hispanic Education Summit in July of 2008, addressing the academic achievement gap, drop out rates, and access and equity in higher education. The core of each topic was parental involvement which has gained high interest. The Commission also published a white-paper report with a strong list of recommendations that came out of the Hispanic Education Summit. The report was released February 2009 and as a result of the report, the Commission formed a special sub-committee in partnership with the Idaho Department of Education to bring together key stakeholders from throughout the state to review the recommendations and create a three-year comprehensive action plan.

Q: What are your plans to continue this very important work in your community?

A: As you will note the Commission has taken the lead in addressing the high demand for parental involvement as well as other issues that focus on education within the state of Idaho. We recently signed an agreement with MALDEF to become the official trainer site for the state of Idaho for which we received amazing media coverage which helps make more and more parents aware of the program and how they can receive the training.

MALDEF Welcomes Back Thomas A. Saenz

MALDEF welcomes Thomas A. Saenz as President and General Counsel.



Saenz has a long, successful history with MALDEF. Before joining Mayor Villaraigosa's team as Counsel in August 2005, Saenz spent the preceding 12 years litigating on behalf of Latino civil rights at MALDEF. During that time, Saenz successfully challenged Proposition 187, the ballot measure that made it illegal for immigrants without the protection of legal status to have access to public education, social services, and health care in California. Saenz also worked on protecting the rights of day laborers and students. In his capacity as Vice President of Litigation, Saenz oversaw MALDEF's efforts nationwide to pursue civil rights litigation in the areas of education, employment, political access, immigrants' rights, and public resource equity.

Saenz's interest in securing a quality education for all children carried into his work as Counsel to Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa, over the last four years. Saenz helped to lead the Mayor's legislative effort to change the governance of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Now that Saenz is back at MALDEF he is committed to continuing protecting the right to have access to a quality education that will prepare students for college and career.

Saenz has also served on the Los Angeles County Board of Education for the past eight years.

