

Visión y Compromiso Conference 2014 CONFERENCE REPORT



Artist: Lupe Gonzalez

“The Essence of the Promotor in the New Millennium”

December 4–6, 2014
Los Angeles, CA

Visión y Compromiso is honored to share the overwhelming success that its twelfth annual conference had having convened nearly 900 Promotores, Community Health Workers and those that work and support their work in Los Angeles December 4-6, 2014, at the LAX Marriott Hotel. Participants represented diverse regions of the state of California and other states of the nation. This convening continues to be the largest of its kind uniquely offering a space to bring together a predominantly monolingual Spanish-speaking workforce of Promotores and other community health workers (CHWs) that represent community clinics, hospitals, family resource centers, school districts, county departments, housing organizations, and organizations dedicated to community organizing efforts. Although this event is planned with California Promotores in mind, we are proud that other states are attracted to this one-of-a-kind event and were well represented this

year from Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Idaho, Washington D.C., New York, and two who came from Guatemala. 95% of participants attended both days.

CONFERENCE GOALS

- 1** To facilitate networking and the sharing of best practices and resources among Promotores and CHWs, program directors and all those interested in the work of Promotores and CHWs;
- 2** To create a space for learning in order to increase the capacity of Promotores and CHWs to serve the communities;
- 3** To continue to advocate for the Promotor model as a vehicle for community development and transformation; and
- 4** To strengthen the Promotores and CHWs movement in California and nationally.

This extraordinary effort was planned and executed in partnership with a local planning committee comprised of eleven Visión y Compromiso staff, Promotores, program directors and other health care professionals representing the following organizations: The March of Dimes, County of Los Angeles—Office of Women’s Health, Health Net, PALS for Health/ALAS Para tu Salud, Braille Institute of Los Angeles, Providence Holy Cross Medical Center, UCLA-LOSH, University of Southern California—CTSI, San Diego Prevention Research Center, American Heart Association, and members of Visión y Compromiso’s regional committees from San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles who helped with developing the conference theme, focus and program as well as all the tasks related to our event.

Our twelfth annual conference could not have been as successful without the invaluable support of these organizations and our sponsors which included:

PLATINUM SPONSORS

California HealthCare Foundation and Kaiser Permanente

GOLD SPONSORS

AARP, American Cancer Society, DentaQuest, First 5 LA, CareFirst Health Plan, Health Net Health Plan, LA Care Health Plan, and Univision

EVENT SPONSORS

Anthem Blue Cross Health Plan, Dignity Health, Inland Empire Health Plan, Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, Lily, March of Dimes, the Marguerite Casey Foundation, and Sutter Health

CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS

Molina Health Care, Alas Para Tu Salud/PALS for Health, Braille Institute

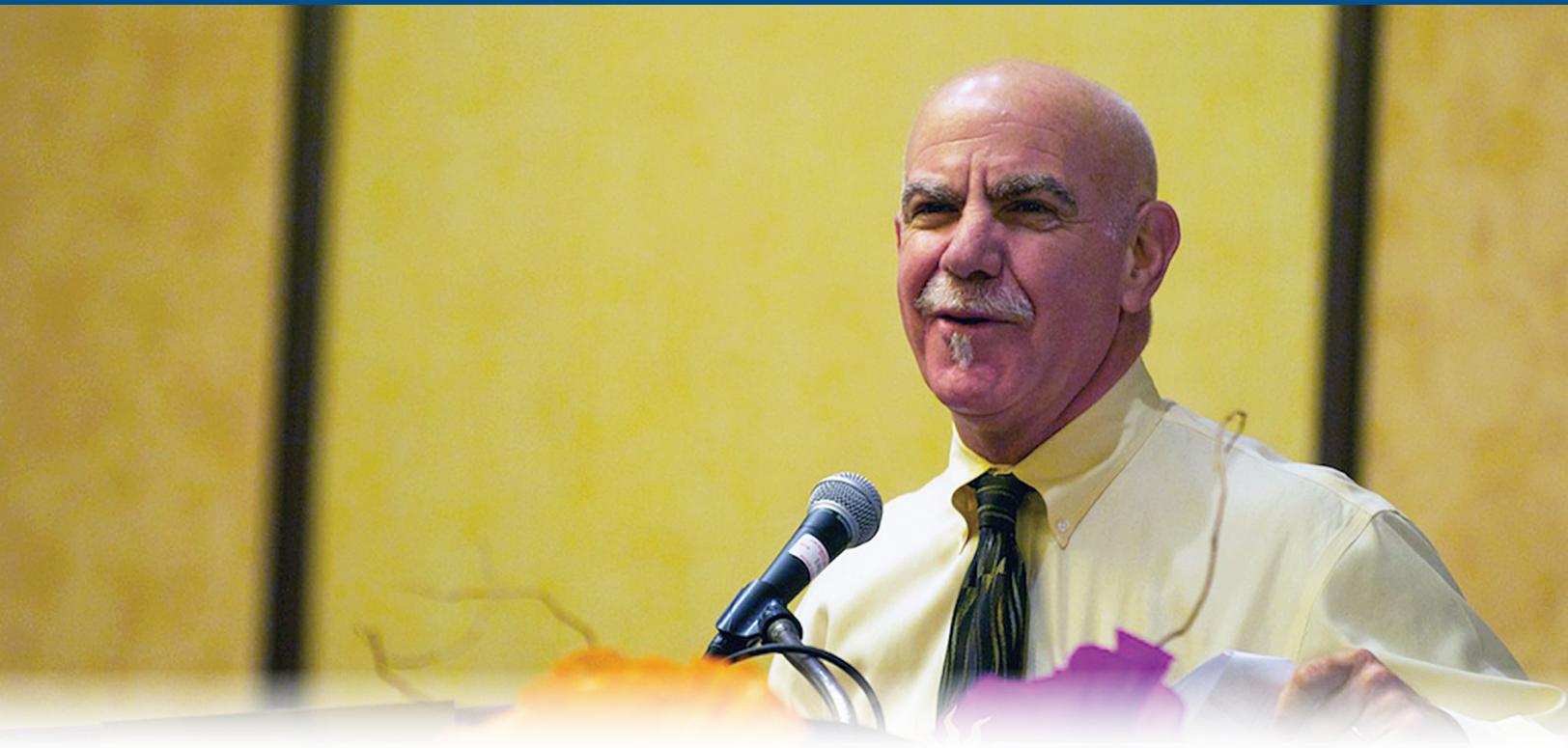
WELCOME RECEPTION

CO-SPONSORS

Blue Shield, Central Coast regional committee, VyC, and San Fernando Valley committee

Other contributing organizations included agencies that were part of our planning committee that donated their time, talents and treasures to this event. This partnership allowed Visión y Compromiso to broaden and increase the capacity of Promotoras and Community Health Workers to continue serving the communities in which they work.





THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Visión y Compromiso achieved its goals through our structured educational and skill building program. Our conference program was designed to give our attendees a variety of topics to choose from with specific learning objectives. The workshops focused on increasing skills and knowledge, sharing best practices, community participatory research, program development, and sustainability.

More than 50 workshops were offered using a holistic health framework that includes physical, mental, environmental, and social health as well as advocacy and personal and professional development. Topics included health studies: the impact on Latino health, diabetes and pregnancy, resume writing, interview skills, civic engagement, embracing Latino LGBTQ youth and their families, communication skills, child abuse, music therapy, dance therapy, health reform and the role of Promotores and CHWs, the California Exchange—Covered California, stress management, oral health, cancer prevention, occupational health

and safety, palliative care, preventing violence in the work place, motivational interviewing, self-care, using HealthyCity.org, childhood disorders, empowering the Latino community to fight cancer, suicide prevention, environmental health, mental health, eye health, diabetes prevention, technology and social networks, heart health, alternative methodologies for working with the community, nutrition and physical activity.

We requested proposals from Promotores, community health workers, their agencies and other health professionals for workshops to be offered during our conference. Our conference program sub-committee select proposals in order to ensure a set of relevant and appropriate topics representing the diverse population from urban and rural areas of California and other parts of the country. These workshops must be accessible to participants from a workforce with multiple and varied skills and knowledge.

We were very successful in securing a wide variety of proposals that focused on different ages from birth to seniors, ideas that focused on

the individual, family and community, and a broad array of topics.

Both days offered a morning plenary that allowed the participants to dialogue with the panel members and other participants. The first day plenary was of significant importance to Visión y Compromiso's work and the work of Promotores as a profession. Our staff along with members of our regional *comites* or working groups, conceptualized and developed "The Essence of the Promotor in the New Millennium." Through a narrated video and a real life representation, participants were exposed to the long and rich history of community workers from around the world and the United States, placing emphasis on what has been and continues to be their key role in health promotion and health access for the communities they serve.

A panel of Promotores addressed what is at the core of a Promotor, how this essence can be sustained in our changing environment, with technological advances and the disparities that our communities continue to face throughout the nation. It was a thought-provoking and inspirational panel that stressed that at the core of every Promotor, regardless of the changes around us, we must not stop caring for the people we are serving. Furthermore, the panel and plenary highlighted that the work we do has always and continues to be done with hope, love and faith which we cannot disregard. In fact, this is what has

made the role of the Promotor ever so valuable.

The plenary was followed by a keynote address by Nely Galan, television producer and entrepreneur and President of the Adelante Movement. This campaign intends to help Latinas nationwide become financially independent through their own businesses. Ms. Galan shared her story and provided concrete steps for promoting a small business. She spoke of funding and training options offered by the Small Business Administration. Latinas in particular do not access these services because many do not know these opportunities are available and attainable to them. In addition, Ms. Galan provided a step-by-step explanation of how to create a website free of charge through Google to promote a business. The conference participants were energized and motivated by Ms. Galan. We know that many Promotores have small home-based businesses including baking, cooking, caring for children, and selling their creations. Learning about opportunities to grow their efforts has the potential to be tremendously valuable.

The 2014 conference **planned, organized and implemented by and for Promotores** generated the opportunity to continue learning, networking, and sharing our work and our common vision for **the well being of the communities we serve.**





On day two our plenary called the Role of the Promotor in Advocacy included a panel of Promotores with experience making changes in their communities. The panel addressed the importance of Promotores becoming engaged civically. The three Promotores represented Los Angeles, Napa County and Tulare County and shared with the audience why and how they began to also engage civically in their communities. What they all had in common was that personal experience was their primary reason for moving beyond health education, promotion and outreach to ensuring solutions are acted upon that bring sustainable change to the issue they are moving forward.

This panel was followed by Maria Elena Hincapie, Executive Director for the National Immigration Law Center who spoke of President Obama's Executive Action that brings hope to thousands of immigrants in the U.S. She emphasized how critical it is for Promotores to share the stories they hear with legislators that reflect who immigrants are in this nation and what their needs are. Ms. Hincapie shared her own personal immigration story that inspired and brought hope to our attendees as she has been pivotal to the President's Executive Action.

Eighty-nine percent of the evaluation respondents expressed being very satisfied and satisfied with the conference overall. Specifically, the areas that were rated highly in satisfaction were workshops, location, length and plenary sessions.

When asked about the most useful aspects of the conference, the workshops and the networking that occurred at the conference continue to be the most useful aspects of our event and they also continue to be the areas that Promotores and other CHWs would like us to improve.

It has become a custom for Visión y Compromiso to honor leaders that support and advocate for the work of Promotores during dinner on the first evening. A wonderful night of celebration transpired with more than 600 Promotores in attendance. Together with Visión y Compromiso's staff members, participants recognized the commitment, passion and service of five individuals and one organization representing the diverse regions of the state of California that have contributed significantly to the advancement of the Promotor movement. We are proud to acknowledge that these six leaders participate with Visión y Compromiso's network, programs and advocacy efforts.



2014 AWARDEES

Rosa Benedicto

Covered CA

Emilia Guenechea

Nancy Halpern-Ibrahim

Lourdes Perez

Alma Torres-Nguyen



Visión y Compromiso has grown into a national organization through its Promotora and Community Health Worker Network. Our regional Network groups in California, Denver, Nevada, Washington and Arizona will be strengthened and sustained in 2015.





During both days, participants were able to obtain more information and resources from our exhibitors representing agencies working in health care and organizations with Promotor/a programs. For the second time, our planning committee identified providers who could offer medical exams to the Promotores and these providers were well visited by our attendees. Like last year, our event offered Promotores medical screenings and this aspect increased in importance for the Promotores. Many participants took full advantage of blood pressure, body mass index, glucose, and cholesterol screenings. We hope to bring back this aspect of the conference and expand the types of services the attendees can access.

This year we brought back the marketplace for Promotores to sell their own wares in order to promote alternative economic development strategies and support the talents of Promotores.

We look forward to begin planning for next year's conference offering three days of relevant programming including workshops, plenaries, exhibitors and networking opportunities. Mental health, physical health, and advocacy were rated the topics of highest interest by Promotores and CHWs for the 2015 conference.

NEXT STEPS

The energy generated at this convening has resulted in a renewed desire and commitment from the local regional leadership groups and has increased their interest in formalizing their network and coalition of Promotoras and programs. Visión y Compromiso has grown into a national organization through its Promotora and Community Health Worker Network, an announcement made during this event and a dream we hope to fulfill with great success. 2015 will be a year in which our regional Network groups in California,

Denver, Nevada, Washington and Arizona are strengthened and sustained. Building the capacity of our regional coordinators and committees has tremendous impact for the future work of Promotores throughout these states and the organizations they are affiliated with. Being able to share resources and best practices in the field of health education and promotion among Promotores, to develop their field of work and expertise, as well as begin to look closer into engaging the communities in which they work, will begin to create a common voice that encourages prevention and self-determination in our field



and will strengthen the efforts of each group and organization. Promotores reported feeling rejuvenated through this conference and finding a network of others, just like them, that have in common the best interest of the members of their communities. Promotores are encouraged and proud that Visión y Compromiso is a strong voice for them and their work, fully committed towards integrating this model in community well-being.

The 2014 conference has again sparked the commitment among the representatives from other states to strengthen their own networks and they have asked Visión y Compromiso to assist in this process, allowing Visión y Compromiso the opportunity to work nationally. During the conference, Visión y Compromiso convened a meeting with representatives of the states that were in attendance and ideas for moving forward to helping others develop their state networks were generated. It is the hope of Visión y Compromiso to strengthen these linkages and begin to work with those states and develop the infrastructure needed to develop the Network of Promotoras and Community Health Workers.

Their ability to work together and cross refer promises to help and support the individuals Promotores and CHWs work with and reduce at the very least, the gap to accessing health care and other services, because they now have health workers partnering to ensure these individuals are receiving the care they need. Promotores and Community Health Workers are critical conduits for prevention and education efforts as well as key in providing community support to the ongoing integration of services for families and providers. As the community of Promotores and Community Health Workers grows so will their role in eliminating health disparities and sustaining community well being.

The 2014 conference was an event that provided the opportunity to continue learning, networking, sharing our work and our common vision for the well being of the communities we serve, planned, organized and implemented by and for Promotores. During our convening we heard from our leadership groups throughout the state who requested more training to carry their regional work plans forward. Topics such as fundraising, grant writing and advocacy are of special interest to continue to leverage the work of Visión y Compromiso in each region. Continued networking among committee members and representatives from other states and countries is an area that will need to grow in order to strengthen our collective voice. We had the honor of hosting two Promotoras from Guatemala who were sponsored by one of our leaders and her organization and who brought to our regional network members another vision for community work that is sustainable by the communities bring served. This sharing enriched our perspective and provided our group with new ideas. Visión y Compromiso remains committed to investing in Promotoras and Community Health Workers throughout the state of California and other states and Mexico through capacity building activities, the convening and networking of programs, organizations and Promotores/CHWs, through advocacy efforts that support Promotores as a viable workforce.



from
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