



June 19, 2009

Dear CIELO family and friends,

We are writing to let you know about some recent changes at CIELO and to request your support.

As you know, CIELO Project is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) volunteer based community organization that has been serving low-income marginalized Latino families and other under served communities in our area for the past 13 years. CIELO offers free English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, Spanish literacy classes, GED preparation classes in Spanish and Computer Literacy classes. Free childcare is provided to help our students attend classes and focus on learning. CIELO also offers family counseling services through a contract with DSHS and parenting classes in partnership with Together!. Our programs provide a safe and culturally supportive means for adult learners to develop basic education, language and parenting skills that help them become more confident and self-sufficient, stay out of unemployment, gain access to better jobs, and achieve and model success for their children. During 2008, Projecto Familia served a total of 193 families, ESL Program served a total of 142 students, Spanish Literacy/GED program served 50 students, and Parenting Wisely served more than 50 individuals in partnership with Together!. As a referral center, CIELO responded to more than 400 phone calls of individuals seeking support (i.e. legal advice, welfare, medical services, citizenship).

Most of our programs take place at Radio Ranch, a facility owned by the Cook Brothers Educational Foundation and made available to us rent free. Thanks to a grant received from United Ways of Thurston County and in partnership with Evergreen Vista Apartments, we are now offering classes in Olympia's Westside in order to be more accessible to the people we serve. Our classes serve an average of 60 students a week, with the help of about 30 volunteers and childcare providers. On a typical ESL class night, Radio Ranch is buzzing with students, children, and volunteers. First we meet as a large group to warm up by singing in English. Then we break off into 5 different levels of ESL classes, while the children enjoy games and play. This scenario repeats itself during the nights of computer, GED, parenting, and literacy classes. We are creating a community, a community of learners.

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Under current economic conditions, the financial situation of CIELO has been hit hard. Due to governmental budget cuts, Proyecto Familia, our main source of income, has experienced a significant reduction (more than 85% compared to 2008) on the number of referrals from DSHS. For CIELO, this represents losing almost \$30,000 a year. This income was covering a large part of our overhead expenses.

To make matters worse, on June 1<sup>st</sup>, we were notified that our ESL program grant of \$34,000 from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) would not be renovated for the period of July 2009-June 2010. We currently project that in order to continue our services through this and the next year we will have to raise about \$107,000 after using up all of our reserved funds. Our staff, students, and volunteers are already hard at work reducing expenses and coming up with alternative funding ideas: some staff members have donated their salaries; our students (mainly low-income individuals, farm and migrant workers) have offered to begin paying a small membership fee for classes; and volunteers are organizing fund-raisers; a number of community partners and individual supporters have assured us of their support (including the Evergreen State College); and CIELO's Board and Director are actively pursuing plans ranging from grant applications to a Benefit Dinner and Auction Fiesta scheduled for this fall. We are committed to CIELO's survival and growth, as the Latino population we serve continues to grow and the need for our services increases.

Now we are kindly asking you to join our efforts and support CIELO to whatever extend you are able. You can send your contribution via check to:

**CIELO Project/Radio Ranch**

**3102 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE**

**Olympia, WA 98506.**

You can also donate on-line and learn more about CIELO by visiting our website at [www.cieloproject.org](http://www.cieloproject.org)

We live at a time that is both challenging and exciting. Change happens with ever increasing speed, and global and national crises can leave us feeling overwhelmed and powerless. Responding to these challenges in a meaningful way requires community organizing and local involvement. It also requires flexibility, and adaptability, and basic skills. CIELO Project offers all this to our students and to our volunteers. Supporting CIELO does not just support individual learners, but also their families, our community, and our world. We, at CIELO, thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for helping us built a stronger self-sufficient community one student at a time.

Gracias,  
Violeta Perales  
Executive Director  
CIELO Project/Radio Ranch