



January 2012

## A Letter from Executive Director Adrienne Foster

To know your history is to know your future. As KHLAAC begins to prepare for the upcoming Legislative Session, I have been researching and evaluating the progress that KHLAAC and the Kansas Hispanic Community has made since its inception in 1974. During this time, I found the Executive Director's first editorial, titled "La Voz del Llano," which excerpts are printed below. In this editorial, director Salvador Gomez offered a challenge to the Hispanic community in Kansas to increase their involvement in state affairs. Gomez wrote his editorial almost 30 years ago. I need you to reach out to KHLAAC at [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov) and tell us how you would respond to this question today, whether it is good, bad or indifferent. Visit [www.khlaac.ks.gov](http://www.khlaac.ks.gov) for the archive of over 30 years of KHLAAC's history.

Sincerely,

*Adrienne Foster*

LA VOZ DEL LLANO

JULIO/JULY

### MENSAJE DEL DIRECTOR

I am the sixth of eight children born to Salvador Perez Gomez and Andrea Ortega Gomez. My father was born and raised in the state of Jalisco, Mexico and my mother was born in Texas. Both of my parents came to Kansas as teenagers and remained in Kansas throughout most of their lives. My father was a railroad section laborer for 40 years with the Santa Fe Railroad Company. My mother was a domestic worker, a cook, a teacher's aide and a great mom.

The majority of my youth was spent in Satanta, a small town in southwestern Kansas. Some of my fondest memories are of Satanta and the boxcar house in which I was raised. I warmly remember the railroad section camp and the row of boxcar houses situated just outside the city limits of Satanta and across the tracks. In those days all of the Mexicans in town (7 or 8 families) lived in the section camp.

Growing up in a small western Kansas town as a member of a small ethnic community demands the development of many survival techniques.

My experience was a typical one for many Mexican Americans who grew up in Kansas in the 50's and 60's. Society demanded that I adopt and maintain an Anglo identity during school hours to avoid rejection and being ostracized. Spanish was always spoken at home and the wonderful smell of tortillas and Chile Verde were constant reminders of my real identity. Tradition and cultural identity were not passed onto me in the same way they were to those persons who lived in places where there are many Hispanic families, who by their interaction, reinforced and promoted the culture and the values found in the culture. I learned of my culture and of traditions by working in the fields with my neighbors and their families

who would make the annual trek from Texas every summer to work in the beet, bean, onion and cantaloupe fields of Kansas. I learned of our rich and colorful culture from my father and his fellow railroad workers, Prucho Arredondo, Ambrosio Limón, Chon Maturey, Enrique Limón, David Cruz and my uncle Guadalupe Gomez. They would sit around a fire, heat their noon meal of tacos, and discuss life, past, present and future. I sensed in those conversations a dilemma. The dilemma manifested itself in the fear these men shared: How do poor, uneducated people assure that their children avoid poverty and illiteracy? The public and private institutions in Kansas operate with an agenda, an agenda which is prepared annually by the leaders of both the public and private sectors. We, the Kansas Hispanic community, have had very little to do with the writing of this agenda in the past. If we are to have a hand in the writing of the Kansas agenda we must be prepared to participate at every level of both the public and private sectors. As a culture of survival we had a tendency to view our society as essentially beyond our control or our ability to reshape.

In this view, which may have been quite realistic in the past, we developed coping strategies. The important agenda was to deal with society in ways that mitigated the racism and oppression in ways that would assure our survival. We coped, we reacted, and we organized, we organized to cope, react, defend and plead.

The Kansas Advisory Committee on Mexican American Affairs will do everything possible to contribute to the dialogue and to the understanding of social, political and economic forces and their relationship to the interests of Hispanics in Kansas. This dialogue will contribute to our growing political sophistication and, therefore, to our self-determination. I am sincerely and firmly committed to the establishment of that dialogue and to the positive change that will come from it.

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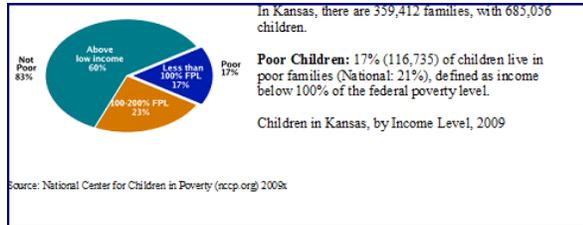
**New in January 2012!** We are re-launching [www.khlaac.ks.gov](http://www.khlaac.ks.gov) to better serve you. Visit us and send us any feedback to [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov).

## Family: The Key to Eradicate Childhood Poverty

Children laughing and enjoying life, not having to worry about anything but to enjoy life and grow. All parents dream to provide a good childhood for their children. Childhood poverty changes everything. Not knowing when your next meal will be or if you will have a house tomorrow creates an environment of despair for parents and children. In the last 50 years, the household structure has changed in the United States. Since 1960 the number of unmarried couples has increased 12-fold and out of wedlock births have increased 8-fold. The divorce rate has doubled since 1960. Although there is no magical cure for childhood poverty, there is hope in sight. At Governor Brownback's town hall meetings held the week of Nov. 14-18, the topic was 'Rising to the Challenge: Reducing Childhood Poverty and Improving Childhood Outcomes in Kansas.' During the Town Hall Meetings, it was discussed how families with two parents create an impact in the outcome of their children. Childhood poverty affects children and families at all levels, there is a correlation between abuse and neglect in poor single families compared with married families. Also, children of single parents are more likely to be high school dropouts. In 2010 more than 9,500 students failed to graduate from school in Kansas. The loss of lifetime earnings for that class of dropouts equals nearly \$2.5 billion. "The lack of husbands and fathers has begun to have a serious strain on this great nation. It is time that we begin to address this issue. Programs such as Marriage for Keeps and the pre-marital counseling that should be going

on before these young couples get together, are vital to eradicating childhood poverty," said Commissioner Robert DeLeon at the Governor's Town Hall Meeting held in Garden City. When the federal government first

erty" said Adrienne Foster, Executive Director of KHLAAC. Children living in poverty sometimes think there is no other way of life for them, "We must get these children to believe in themselves and that they aren't what their situation makes them feel. I continue to remind these young people that education is the great equalizer. That, through an education, they can pull themselves out of poverty," DeLeon said.

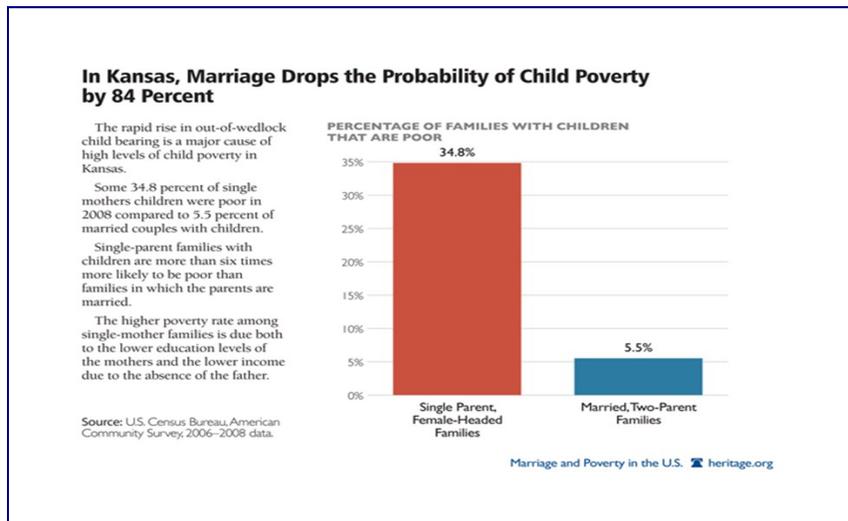


launched the War on Poverty in 1964, only 4 percent of births in Kansas were non-marital. In 2009, 38 percent of children in Kansas were born outside marriage. Single parent families are six times more likely to be poor than married families. Marriage drastically reduces the poverty rate in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups. "Research shows if you don't graduate from high school, have a child and get married a couple of years later, you have 11% chance of living in poverty. In the other hand, if you are a single parent and you don't graduate from high school, you have 88% chance of living in pov-

erty" said Adrienne Foster, Executive Director of KHLAAC. Marriage is a proven institution that reduces poverty and improves the lives of children while creating strong communities.

The first step for eliminating childhood poverty is educating young people about the importance of family and marriage. Give them the tools to create strong families and reduce the divorce rate, and at the government level, reduce anti-marriage penalties in welfare programs.

**With Information from:** The Heritage Foundation ([heritage.org/Research/Projects/Marriage-Poverty/Marriage-and-Poverty-in-the-US\\_nccp.org](http://heritage.org/Research/Projects/Marriage-Poverty/Marriage-and-Poverty-in-the-US_nccp.org)), U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2005-2009, Rising to the Challenge: Reducing Childhood Poverty and Improving Childhood Outcomes in Kansas.



## Struggling for Air

Maria Jose has suffered asthma since she was a little girl. Her mother recalls with horror her first attack, they didn't know what was happening and they ended at the emergency room (ER).

For those suffering from asthma they know an attack is not a joke, it is a matter of life and death. They need medical care immediately. What are the trigger factors and why is the Hispanic community on the top of the charts for suffering this disease?

The American Lung Association released a new report, *Luchando por el Aire: The Burden of Asthma on Hispanics*, which provides an overview of the biological, environmental, political and cultural factors that increase asthma's burden on the Hispanic population. The report is part of the Lung Association's *Disparities in Lung Health Series*. To read the report, visit [www.Lung.org/Asthma-In-Hispanics](http://www.Lung.org/Asthma-In-Hispanics). This document reveals how Hispanics are less likely to get the proper medical care and more likely to end up being treated at the ER or hospitalized in a crisis.

Hispanics represent 16 percent of the population in the U.S., and they account for nearly one-third of people who do not have health insurance. Because of the lack of medical insurance, they don't get frequent checkups or the proper treatments to control and manage their asthma.

### Environmental Triggers

Poverty and stress have been shown to affect the body's immune response, increasing inflammation and worsening asthma. Asthma symptoms have two main causes: airway constriction and inflammation. Both occur within the airways of the lungs.

According to the study by the American Lung Association, "Hispanics in California are 165 percent more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of particulate matter pollution, and 51 percent more likely to live in counties with unhealthy levels of ozone compared to non-Hispanic."

For more information about lung health and resources, contact the American Lung Association help line at 1-800-548-8252.

With the proper medical care, and learning more about the disease, Maria Jose has been able to control her asthma. Now she recognizes the symptoms before she gets a full attack so she doesn't have to go to the hospital. She understands that she needs to manage her stress levels, exercise regularly and visit her doctor to keep her medical condition under control.

**With information from:** [Asthma.com](http://Asthma.com), [Lung.org/Asthma-In-Hispanics](http://Lung.org/Asthma-In-Hispanics)

### Nuevo sitio en español para registrarse para votar

Elections are around the corner and all Spanish speaking voters can register online in their own language. The goal of this site is to make it quick and easy for everyone who is eligible to vote to register in the comfort of their home or wherever they have internet access.

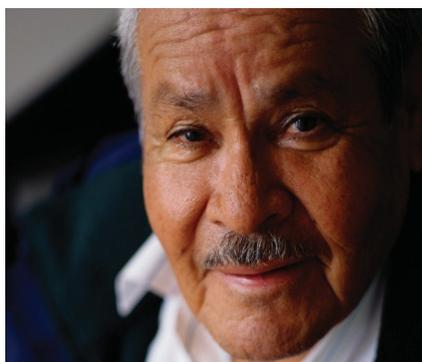
The site simplifies all state requirements with specific instructions. What eligible voters need to do:

1. Visit [www.InscribeteHoy.com](http://www.InscribeteHoy.com) to register in Spanish or [www.GottaRegister.com](http://www.GottaRegister.com) for English.
2. Review the required documentation and click register online.
3. You can click "continue" to complete the form online or print a copy from the link.
4. Complete the questioner and click "continue".
5. The website produces a registration form with clear instructions on how and where to file it.

Visit <http://www.InscribeteHoy.com> to register for the upcoming elections.

## Health and Human Services (HHS) Plans to Reduce Health Disparities

On April 8, 2011, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Center for Health Equity served as the host agency for the Office of Minority Health Region VII (Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska) launch of two historical strategic plans aimed at reducing health disparities in the United States. Disparities are broadly defined to include race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, age, geography, and a variety of other factors. The plans, released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are designed to strengthen and expand community-led efforts to achieve health equity.



The HHS “Action Plan to Reduce health Disparities” outlines goals and actions the agency will take to reduce health disparities among racial, ethnic, tribal, and underserved populations.

The “National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity” provides a common set of goals and objectives for public and private sector initiatives and partnerships to help racial and ethnic minorities and other underserved groups to reach their full health potential. The strategy, a product of the National



Partnership for Action (NPA), coordinated by the HHS Office of Minority Health, incorporates ideas, suggestions and comments from thousands of individuals and organizations across the country. The five goals of the National Stakeholder Strategy are as follows:

**Goal 1: Awareness** — Increase awareness of the significance of health disparities, their impact on the nation, and the actions necessary to improve health outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations.

**Goal 2: Leadership** — Strengthen and broaden leadership for addressing health disparities at all levels.

**Goal 3: Health System and Life Experience** — Improve health and healthcare outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations.

**Goal 4: Cultural and Linguistic Competency** — Improve cultural and linguistic competency and the diversity of the health-related workforce.

**Goal 5: Data, Research, and Evaluation** — Improve data availability and coordination, utilization, and diffusion of research and evaluation outcomes.



Racial and ethnic minorities, sovereign nations, and members of underserved populations still lag behind in many health outcome measures. They are less likely to get the preventive care they need to stay healthy and they are more likely to suffer from serious illnesses (such as diabetes or heart disease). When they get sick, they are less likely to have access to quality health care. A CD that includes full copies of the National Partnership for Action Toolkit can be found at the website below. For this information and other key resources visit the Center for Health Equity at



[www.healthequityks.org](http://www.healthequityks.org). Additionally, as state and local health departments and hospitals work together to assess readiness for accreditation efforts, community

health assessments are critical. At the heart of community health assessments are your voices, knowledge, and passion to assure conditions for better health outcomes are rooted in the cultural values, traditions, and hopes of our people. It is our hope that the plans provide a common language and framework in which to address reduction of health disparities and promote equity in health.

For more information about the Center for Health Equity, please find us on the web.

## Silent Heroes

Juan and Juana Reyes Gonzales immigrated from Leon, Mexico to the U.S. at the beginning of the twentieth century. They had eleven children—six boys and five girls. Five brothers- Leocadio Gonzales, Salvador Reyes Gonzales, Viviano Reyes Gonzales, Gabriel Reyes Gonzales and Alfonso Reyes Gonzales- decided to serve their nation, inspired by doing what is right and for love of God and their country, for their family and with pride of their Mexican American Heritage. The five brothers served honorably in the elite 82<sup>nd</sup>, 101<sup>st</sup>, and the 11<sup>th</sup> airborne Army Divisions. They served in World War II and the Korean War. Because of the inspiration and model that these men provided for their family including children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, the next generations have chosen to serve this country in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan within various branches of the military: Army, Navy, Marines, and ROTC programs. We spoke with Elizabeth Barranco, daughter of Alfonso Reyes Gonzales about her family legacy and contributions to the community. “My dad at a very young age had the vision to start his career through the military” said Elizabeth. Her father joined the military when he was 17 years old. Through the GI Bill, Alfonso was able to attend Washburn and Kansas State college and purchase his first home. “Growing in a military home there were a lot of values instilled in us: serving others and a great work ethic. My brother is a Topeka police officer and my sister is a social worker/teacher, I have another brother in the private sector and we all try to serve our community and do what is right in all that we do” added Elizabeth.



**Alfonso Reyes Gonzales** is currently 72 years old. The youngest of the brothers, Alfonso joined the military with his parents' approval when he was 17 years old. Alfonso, was part of the 82<sup>nd</sup>

Airborne Division Paratrooper. “To be certified as a paratrooper and earn your parachute wings, you had to make five jumps in one week; this was done after you had eight weeks of advanced extensive physical airborne training. The airplanes used to drop troops during WWII and the Korean War were the G119s called flying boxcars, gliders, C-46s and C47s,” said Alfonso. Alfonso’s son Roderick Gonzales served in the Army Reserve and grandson Matthew Gonzales served in the Army and served a tour in Iraq.



**Leocadio R. Gonzales** was born in 1921 and passed away in 2011. Leo, as their family called him, was the first brother to join the forces. He served in World War II as a paratrooper at the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.

He was awarded a Purple Heart, three bronze service stars, parachute wings, and a gold star for his combat jumps. His courage inspired the next generations. His son and several of his grandkids have served in the military fueled with Leo’s legacy of honor and service.



**Salvador Reyes Gonzales** was born in 1928 and passed away in 2011. Sal, a veteran of World War II, was part of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.



**Viviano Reyes Gonzales** was born in 1930 and passed away in 2002. He was a veteran of the Korean War. He was part of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Combat Jump Paratrooper.



**Gabriel Reyes Gonzales** was born in 1934 and passed away in 1999. He was a veteran of the Korean era; he was part of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division Paratrooper. He had one grandson who also served in the military.



**Joe Lowe Gonzales** (a nephew) was born in 1942 and passed away in 1975. He was a Vietnam Veteran and part of the U.S. Marine Corps. He was awarded a Purple Heart for

the injuries he received in combat; due to a mine explosion he lost his leg. He was also awarded the armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. His Mother was Felicia Reyes Gonzales Chavez.

Elizabeth learned, by growing with these exemplar individuals, to be thankful for the democracy and the many blessings that come with freedom. “There are many other families who sacrificed their sons and daughters to create a strong country. The compassion and the pride of freedom are on the faces of the men and women who serve every day. I am proud of my family. They exemplify service in the community. Having this family history fuels my desire to do things right for the community. They are silent heroes who ask for nothing and provide an everlasting impact in our lives,” added Elizabeth.

## Stop Texting and Save Lives

Nearly 500,000 young adults each year are injured due to various forms of distracted driving, including texting, mobile instant messaging, updating social media platforms, sending photos, etc. It's a habit deadlier than drunk driving.

To help create a safer community, the Ad Council collaborated with the office of the State Attorneys General and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to create a Texting and Driving Prevention campaign titled **Stop the Texts. Stop the Wrecks.**

### Facts about Texting and Driving

**Fact 1** - Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field. (2009, VTTI)

**Fact 2** - A texting driver is 23 times more likely to get into an accident than a non-texting driver. (2009, VTTI)

**Fact 3** - Of those killed in distracted-driving-related crashes, 995 involved reports of a cell phone as a distraction (18% of fatalities in distraction-related crashes). (NHTSA)

### Tips to prevent accidents:

- Silence your cell phone
- Designate a texter
- Don't text and drive

For more information visit [www.ktsro.org](http://www.ktsro.org) or [www.stoptextsstopwrecks.org](http://www.stoptextsstopwrecks.org)

Source: [www.stoptextsstopwrecks.org](http://www.stoptextsstopwrecks.org)



### Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to volunteer as an Advisor on one of the following Committees:

- Marketing
- Education
- Legal
- Health
- Community Outreach
- Business
- Arts
- Youth Outreach

Please email [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov) or call 785.296.3465.

If you are trying to attract diverse talent, create a positive impact in the community, and create brand awareness, sponsoring the KHLAAC Newsletter can be an efficient and cost effective way to communicate with the Hispanic and Latino– American community. For more information email [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov) or call 785.296.3465.

To contact KHLAAC visit [www.khlaac.ks.gov](http://www.khlaac.ks.gov)

### Commission Meetings

The meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in participating, contact your commissioners or email [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov) for more information.

#### Second Meeting

**Date:** Feb. 10, 2012

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.-noon

**Location:** 900 SW Jackson 2nd floor, Topeka Kan.

#### Third Meeting

**Date:** March 1, 2012

**Time:** 9 a.m.-3p.m.

**Location:** 900 SW Jackson 2nd floor, Topeka Kan.

#### Fourth Meeting

**Date:** May 11, 2012

**Time:** 8:30a.m.-noon

**Location:** TBD- Garden City Kan.

### Community Champions

Do you know of an individual who has made a difference in the community? If you do, and you want to share with the community all the great things this person does, send an email to [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov).

The story needs to be 300 words.  
Please include a picture.

#### Criteria:

- Works with the Hispanic Community.
- Is passionate about what he/she does and inspires others.

The KHLAAC Newsletter is sent by email bi-monthly and printed twice a year.

The newsletter is mailed to active non-profits, State offices, schools and partner organizations.

Subscribe to the KHLAAC bi-monthly publication by sending an email to

[khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov)

or by visiting

[www.khlaac.ks.gov](http://www.khlaac.ks.gov)

**For employment opportunities visit [www.khlaac.ks.gov](http://www.khlaac.ks.gov) If you would like to advertise your open positions please email [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov) or post them in our Facebook account.**

### Calendar of Events

**Event:** Expanding Your Horizons

**Date:** Jan. 20, 2012

**Time:** 6-10:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Professional women from science and math-related fields (TBA)

**Cost:** \$5

**Place:** Science City at Union State

**Contact:**

[onehealthkansas.k-state.edu/events/151](http://onehealthkansas.k-state.edu/events/151)

**Event:** Girls Researching our World (GROW): Helping Hands

**Date:** Feb. 18, 2012

**Time:** 9:00- 4:00 p.m.

**Led by:** K-State Undergraduates

**Place:** K-State main campus

**Contact:**

[onehealthkansas.k-state.edu/events/153](http://onehealthkansas.k-state.edu/events/153)

### Wichita Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

**Event:** "Embracing/ Partnering the Future with

WHCC"

**Date:** Jan. 17, 2012

**Time:** 11:30- 1:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Patty Koehler- WHCC Board Chair & Abel M. Perez- Executive Director

**Event:** "Partnering with the WHCC & the KHEDF"

**Date:** Feb. 21, 2012

**Time:** 11:30-1:00 p.m.

**Contact:**

[www.wichitahispanicchamber.org](http://www.wichitahispanicchamber.org)

### Kansas City Events

**Event:** March for Life 2012 Washington DC

**Date:** Jan. 20-24, 2012

**Time:** Friday at noon

**Cost:** \$305 per student/ chaperone

**Place:** Savior Pastoral Center Kansas City, KS

**Contact:**

[www.archkck.org](http://www.archkck.org)

### Topeka Events

**Event:** 2012 State Address to the Kansas legislature

**Date:** Jan. 11, 2011

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

**Speaker:** Gov. Sam Brownback

**Place:** House Chamber

**Event:** "El Encuentro" – The Encounter is a three day retreat in **Spanish** for those who need some guidance in their life. **You have to be 15 years or older to participate.**

**Date:**

March 16, 17, 18- Women  
March 30, 31 and April 1 - Men  
June 22, 23 and 24 – Men  
July 6, 7 and 8 – Women  
Oct. 12, 13 and 14 – Women  
Oct. 26, 27 and 28– Men

**Contact:** for more information call 785.266.4647

**Do you have events for the community? Call 785.296.3465 or email KHLAAC at [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov).**