



2004 News

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THE ASPIRANTE

Official Newsletter of ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.

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Educational Talent Search



College Bound

Interwoven in the fabric of what ASPIRA does every day is the encouragement of Aspirantes (program participants) to pursue a career through higher education. ASPIRA takes its name from the Spanish verb "*Aspirar*", which means "to aspire, to strive for something greater." ASPIRA's public policy position is and shall always be "to increase the access of post-secondary education for Puerto Rican, Latino and other minority youth." ASPIRA achieves this goal through the interpersonal and professional relationship of the ASPIRA Youth Advisor (mentor) and the Aspirantes (mentees).

Utilizing a community and school based approach, ASPIRA receives funding from public/private local, state, and federal sources as well as the Children's Trust Funds, the United Way and foundations for **Positive Youth Development Program Initiatives (PYD)**. The investment of these resources helps fund the following ASPIRA programs throughout Miami Dade, Broward & Palm Beach Counties: the After School ASPIRA Leadership Clubs, Educational Talent Search, Drug Free Schools, WIA-Stay In School, Juvenile Justice, and Children and Families Prevention/Intervention Programs. The ASPIRA Miami-Dade County Public **Charter Schools Program** is our school-based model for middle school students, grades 6, 7 and 8. Located in the cities of Miami, Homestead and North Miami, the ASPIRA Charter Schools are dedicated to leadership development, academic achievement and community service. In addition, ASPIRA provides night school enrollment and education via the Child/Parent Family Literacy Programs, Adult Basic Education and access to ASPIRA's Power-Up Labs and Community Technology Computer Centers. ASPIRA is a social science based dropout prevention, high school graduation and college retention model.

Why does ASPIRA utilize the Positive Youth Development Program (**PYD**) focus? The **PYD** Program emphasizes the skills, potential, abilities, and talents of young people. PYD is the theoretical framework of ASPIRA's Youth Leadership Development Program and the ASPIRA Process of Awareness, Analysis and Action (**A³**). The ASPIRA community based outreach model provides advocacy, advice, guidance, and support from schools, families, programs, and neighborhoods. Also, the youth stage of human growth and development is a period where dramatic physical, emotional, and educational changes take place. Children and youth make the transition to adulthood; many leave home, marry and start families of their own, attend post-secondary education or begin careers. The ASPIRA Model has a positive impact on the lives of youth during this critical period. Significantly, there is no other community based youth organization in mainstream America that is doing positive youth development and outreach into the Latino communities.

As parents, educators, advocates, guidance counselors and students, what can we do to help increase the access of post-secondary educational opportunities for Puerto Ricans, Latinos and other minority youth? We can emphasize leadership through education. The following are websites to help prepare for college:

The ASPIRA Website;

www.aspira.org

The U.S. Department of Education:

www.ed.gov

The Coalition of America's Colleges and Universities: www.collegeispossible.org