

Nueva Generación

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Sara Delgado, Icela Donahue and Maria Mijares in class

The *Nueva Generación* (New Generation) cohort grew out of a partnership between the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) and Chicago State University (CSU). The program started in 2000 through a five-year federal grant, and has since served as a model for Illinois Grow Your Own Teachers initiative. The continuation of the project has been funded since 2006 through a transitional grant under the Illinois Grow Your Own initiative.

The partners in this project are:

Chicago State University
Chicago Public Schools

Logan Square Neighborhood Association

This project is a true collaboration – the university and community organization share leadership; the university is the fiscal agent on the grant.

The Cohort: *Nueva Generación* has 21 active participants, all of whom are Hispanic; two are men. Seventeen came to the program with at least some college experience. More than 80% have children in their immediate households. All but three work full-time, and 13 are employed in the schools; a few others are staff persons of the community organization.

From the outset, *Nueva Generación* was unique in that the impetus for the program came from the community organization, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, which recognized the critical need for quality teachers with strong ties to their community, and at the same time recognized the great skill and desire of many of the parents who had passed through its Parent Mentor program.

Of the 21 *Nueva Generación* cohort members, two have graduated from Chicago State University and three are scheduled to graduate in December 2007. The talented and persistent group has demonstrated to their peers that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Though all students are parents and the great majority work full-time, they have maintained a collective average GPA of 3.5. Project *Nueva Generación* is grounded in the community and the local schools in Logan Square. Many teacher candidates first developed a passion for education through volunteering at their children's schools through LSNA's Parent Mentor Program, in which parents are trained and placed in classrooms to help a teacher two hours daily throughout the year. Full time CSU professors come out to LSNA's school-based Community Learning Centers to teach the Project *Nueva Generación* program courses; other candidates travel to the University campus for specialized classes in the education curriculum.

Through shared classes and ensuing study groups the cohort has built a family-like support structure, where participants encourage each other to press on. Project *Nueva Generación* continues to be rooted in the community. Teacher candidates are now working in local schools as teacher assistants, student-teaching at a local elementary schools, and tutoring Logan Square's second cohort, *Maestros sin Fronteras*.