



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Driscoll Children's Health Plan awards \$300,000 grant to AVANCE – Rio Grande Valley, Inc.

PRESS RELEASE

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Rio Grande Valley, TX – December 7, 2011 Driscoll Children's Health Plan (DCHP) has awarded AVANCE-Rio Grande Valley, Inc. \$300,000 in funding to implement a new program called Cadena de Madres (Network of Mothers). Cadena de Madres is a free value added service offered to enrollees in DCHP.

The Cadena de Madres Project will provide culturally appropriate information and a supportive environment for pregnant women to promote positive behaviors. The program is offered through a series of baby showers at various sites every week in Hidalgo, Cameron, Starr & Willacy Counties. The "Baby Showers" will be presented in three sessions celebrating pregnancy, offering games, prizes, and healthy snacks. While attending the baby showers, the participant will learn how to make healthy choices during their pregnancy and recognize the negative impact of smoking, alcohol, and drugs on their health. They will comprehend the advantages of prenatal care and understand the complications that may occur during their pregnancy as well as learn to recognize signs of preterm labor, and early labor signs, and understand when medical intervention is needed. A second component of the project is a monthly post-natal home visitation program. This will include monthly home visitation by a health education advocate for six months post partum to assist the mother with basic newborn care, immunization compliance, and safety tips.

The program will begin in the Rio Grande Valley in March, 2012. For the past 5 years, DCHP has contracted with AVANCE-Corpus Christi, Inc. to provide the same services in Nueces, Bee, Jim Wells, Kleberg and Victoria Counties. Due to the implementation of the Cadena de Madres program in those counties, there has been a significant decrease in premature birth rates.

"This grant gives us the opportunity to provide a whole new array of services that are directly beneficial to the mission of AVANCE. Unlocking America's Potential begins with helping families bring their children into the world in the healthiest way possible," said Monica Peña, Executive Director with AVANCE-Rio Grande Valley, Inc.

AVANCE-RGV began operations in 1991 in Brownsville, Texas with one office. The Rio Grande Valley Chapter of AVANCE (AVANCE-RGV) is focused primarily on serving low- income Hispanic families in Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy and Cameron Counties, covering 4,872 square miles along the Rio Grande River. Today we have 12 sites and annually, the program reaches out to approximately 1,500 families and over 3,000 children throughout the 4 counties. The majority of our constituents reside in colonias: unincorporated settlements or makeshift subdivisions typically lacking the most basic services, such as water and sewer, paved roads and electrical utility service. Colonia residents tend to be the working poor living substantially below the federal poverty line.

More Info about AVANCE:

AVANCE is one of the oldest, largest and most distinguished parenting/early education programs in the country. Since 1973, AVANCE has continued to provide innovative education and family support services to predominately Hispanic families in underprivileged communities. Dedicated to promoting school readiness and supporting family engagement AVANCE proudly serves as the national model and best practice of early childhood education for parents, teachers, the scientific community and general public.

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