



National Latino Children's Institute

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NATIONAL CHILD SAFETY SEAT INITIATIVE EDUCATES HISPANIC FAMILIES

Traffic Fatalities Leading Cause of Death for Latino Youth

Los Angeles, CA—*Corazón de mi Vida* (you are the center of my life), a national bilingual initiative created by the National Latino Children's Institute (NLCI) kicked-off its LA efforts today. NLCI and Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services joined forces with the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation (MAOF) to inform Latino families, child care providers and the Spanish-speaking community about the important role that safety seats and seat belts play in saving children's lives.

According to the State of California Highway Patrol, Los Angeles County holds the highest number of fatal motor vehicle crashes in the state of California. Motor vehicle crash injuries are the leading cause of death for Latino children of all ages (after the first year of life), as reported by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

"*Corazón de mi Vida* builds on parents' love for their children and provides them with the information they need to keep their children safe," said Carlos Santiago, director of the board, NLCI. "Ford Motor Company's involvement has helped us reach more Hispanic communities throughout the country and plant the seed through trainings and partnerships with safety advocates."

During the event, hosted by MAOF, a practical demonstration on the use of child safety seats and their installation in vehicles took place. In addition, certified technicians from the area inspected the family's vehicles to determine whether their child safety seat was properly installed. Ford Motor Company donated fifty car seats for families who did not have their child in a safety seat.

"We are excited to partner with NLCI on the *Corazón de mi vida* initiative," said Martin Castro, president & CEO of MAOF. "It's a great way to get the message out on the importance of child safety seats and seat belts to LA-area families. Our children are our future and in order to keep them safe we must continue to work together to encourage the correct use of safety seats and seat belts."

"We are pleased to continue to work with NLCI to raise awareness of child passenger safety in Latino communities," said Rocky Egusquiza, Director of Community Development and International Strategy, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. "Working on this initiative with NLCI is a natural fit for Ford Motor Company since safety education is one of our top priorities."

Cultural and language barriers are contributing factors to the alarming traffic fatality incidents in the Latino community. Aimed at breaking these barriers, *Corazón de mi vida* emphasizes the valuable role children play in the lives of family and society. It capitalizes on the child-focused nature of the Latino culture in order to encourage the proper use of child safety seats and seat belts. The name of the campaign, *Corazón de mi vida*, is a term of endearment used between family members and close friends to express that someone is at the center of their life.

Corazón de mi vida is a bilingual and bicultural educational program on child passenger safety. The program was developed by the National Latino Children's Institute and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

For additional information about child passenger safety and seat belts please go to www.nlci.org.

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The National Latino Children's Institute (NLCI) is a non-profit organization; its mission is to promote and implement the National Latino Children's Agenda—a comprehensive statement of principles for the healthy and complete development of young Latinos. Incorporated in 1997 in San Antonio, Texas, the institute focuses the nation's attention on policies, programs, and community initiatives that lead to the full and healthy development of Latino children. It is the only Latino organization with young Latinos as its primary emphasis.