

A New Dawn Clinic Brings Sunshine

"Ana" felt she was living in the darkness before she began participating in the Un Nuevo Amanecer (UNA) Program, a new depression clinic at UCC for Latino elderly. After meeting with her consejera personal (case manager) she was able to express her emotions and understand how to overcome her challenges and take action.

Like others, "Ana" enrolled in the program because of depression, family situations, and development or worsening of chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and memory problems. Since meeting with their case manager, many have expressed a decrease in their feelings of isolation and hopelessness, have overcome the cultural stigma around depression, and felt their memory has improved.

Recently, a celebration was held to commemorate the first year of the program and to share program successes. Staff and clients shared information about the program including how grateful many clients were for the bilingual, bicultural services. These services are in great demand in Milwaukee as there are only a handful of bilingual psychiatrists and therapists and the wait for a first appointment can take up to 3 months or more, which for a depressed individual can mean the difference between life and death.

In the first year of the program almost 150 people were screened, 105 were eligible to enroll, and 80 people received treatment. The personalized treatment begins as soon as the patient enrolls, and it engages the patient in setting weekly goals for themselves; while also engaging their primary care physician, family, and their support system in helping them reach those goals. It also prepares them for life after the treatment to prevent relapse. Staff spend significant amounts of time working with each client to help them understand depression as an illness and it's mind-body connection.

During the celebration clients met with the directors and evaluators of the program (mostly "behind the scenes staff") for the first time and learned about their roles in the program to ensure that the program is providing them with the best services possible. "Ana" and others thanked the UNA team for working together to address their needs saying: "You have saved my life. Before the program, I thought my life was over and no one was there for me. Now, at UCC we have a place to go to where we can get help and have a better quality of life." Funded through a grant by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the program will continue through two more years, and the staff is hopeful they can bring sunshine into the lives of many more in the community this coming year.

**Please refer anyone you feel can
benefit to the New Dawn Clinic and
ask for Deborah Padilla at
(414) 643-8530.**

