

# ARISE

Educación y Cultura Para Tu Futuro

A Resource in Serving  
Equality

Welcome to ARISE.  
Bienvenidos a ARISE.

February 2011

ISSUE 1. {ARISE}



## Welcome To Our First E-Newsletter!

The staff of ARISE is proud to announce the first of our monthly e-newsletters. Sometimes our busy schedules prevent us from reaching out to the public as much as we would like to, so we thought it would be a great idea to communicate about what we're doing through these newsletters. We are excited about our plans for 2011! The ARISE staff has been working diligently on creating new projects for our youth this summer as well as our continued commitment to working with immigrants in fulfilling their dreams and providing education and opportunities to become active in social justice issues. Please follow along with us as we continue on our journey working to educate and empower our *colonia* families.

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ARISE colonia residents formed the first community PTA in the nation. Now in their second year, ARISE S. Tower Community PTA has more than doubled their membership to 75. In an effort to empower more immigrant parents, the women have extended leadership to other parents interested in starting their own PTA.

Proyecto Juan Diego and Mano a Mano showed their support for families from Brownsville colonias by having ARISE facilitate this workshop. ARISE S. Tower PTA travelled Brownsville to share the steps involved in creating a community PTA. Eva Carranza, president of ARISE S. Tower PTA, spoke on the importance of a PTA and why other communities need to organize and have their voices heard.

(translated) “The main requirement of our PTA is that the meetings be conducted in Spanish. The information sent from schools to parents is mostly in English, and at times the Spanish version is not translated correctly. It’s important for us to have access to information regarding our children’s education in Spanish. Another one of our basic challenges is transportation. The majority of families in the colonias have one car, and the husband usually takes that car to work. How can we make it to

the meetings when most of us live far from the schools?”

Our PTA has been very successful in our community for the following reasons: The meetings are conducted in Spanish, they are located in our neighborhoods (ARISE provides transportation to women who live in neighboring colonias), and are scheduled at a time that works for us (in the mornings). We have the opportunity to ask questions, most of which are answered. We invite school board members, and other speakers to our meetings. They use simple terminology that we, as housewives, understand. This has helped us tremendously. Schools send us information with vocabulary that we don’t understand, because we never or rarely ever use those words.

With the support of this PTA, mothers have begun to support their children in a way that wasn’t possible for them before. The state offers so many programs that we are either not aware of or simply don’t understand very well. We want to know and understand all the changes in state and federal laws in regards to education. That is a necessity for us. It is also important for us to support other communities so that they too have these tools in their hands.”



A resident from the community voices her thoughts on why a community PTA is needed in this area.



ARISE PTA President Eva Carranza speaks to a group of parents in Brownsville.

## TAKING ACTION.

### Colonia Residents Unite Against Anti-Immigrant Legislation.

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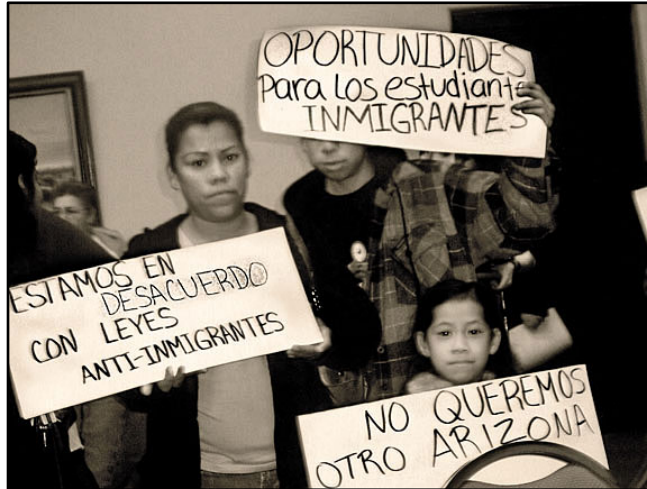
The Texas Legislature has proposed a number of anti-immigrant bills, which if passed, will not only affect individuals, possibly tearing immigrant families apart, but will also affect local businesses.

Citizenship could be denied to children born in the United States if the child's parents did not enter the U.S. legally. Another bill will deny access to employment, grants, loans, professional and commercial licenses, and other aids to citizens if the child's parents were undocumented at the time of the child's birth.

ARISE, and other groups who form the Equal Voice Network, are engaging in a number of activities to gain community support. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 500 RGV residents will travel to Austin to join in a march and rally. They will present 20,000 postcards signed by RGV residents stating their opposition to the proposed laws. Residents are also visiting their churches and local businesses to have them sign resolutions that oppose these laws.

ARISE's "Voces del Pueblo" committee is a group of women from Alamo *colonias* that meet to discuss issues affecting their neighborhoods, their children's education, immigration, and many other topics. They are going door to door informing neighbors on the effects these laws could have on their community.

Mrs. Sotelo, a resident of *colonia* Mexico



Chiquito, shared her story. (translated) "I am afraid to take my children back to Mexico." Her daughter was born here, but her son was born in Mexico. She doesn't want her family to be separated, so if they deport her she will take her daughter. "I

know about these laws. I don't like them, and I'm scared. I'm ready to fight against these laws." Mrs. Sotelo's story is like many others: An immigrant family who dreamed of a better life and found success in the U.S. Now their future is in jeopardy. If they are forced to leave, she is determined to start from the bottom up once again, in Mexico.

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<http://www.arisesotex.org>

## SUPPORT ARISE TODAY

There are many ways in which you can support the work of ARISE. These include volunteer work and in-kind donations of goods and services. You can make a tax-deductible monetary contribution by check sent to the following address:

**ARISE**

P.O. Box 778 Alamo, TX 78516

or by credit card:

<http://www.arisesotex.org/SupportOurWork.asp>