

National **Hispanic** Institute

SINCE 1979

THE GREAT DEBATE

Student and Parent Handbook

NHI's Commitment to the US Latino Community

In our nation's classrooms of today, 21.7% of Latino youth (530,000) in high school dropout before completing their diplomas. Of the those who graduate, 66.6% or 1.6 million do not pursue college studies. This means that as many as 88% or approximately 2.1 million will find themselves having to manage their lives at the lower ends of the American economic totem pole, earning incomes that could range as low as \$18,000 to \$33,000 per year. These amounts are hardly the levels of income that let parents or children lead healthy, quality lives.

These conditions also create a "perfect storm" scenario that have historically led to large numbers of Latinos living in crowded community conditions, practicing unhealthy lifestyles, and experiencing the ills often reported in research studies and newspaper accounts, i.e., crime and delinquency, high divorce rates, large

numbers of unwed mothers, widespread drug abuse, low family incomes, etc. These problems, however, become particularly magnified when considering that this population sector is also the fastest growing in the United States. Already at 44 million, Latinos in the United States are predicted to reach 100 million or 1 in 4 Americans by 2050.



trained young leaders to help guide the future. By expanding access to our nation's top colleges and universities for high potential Latino youth while also engaging them in early community leadership experiences that make civic engagement and participation community public policy an integral part of their development, NHI concentrated on strengthening and expanding the reservoir of trained and skilled leaders from which the Latino community and its organized sectors could select the caliber of individuals with the vision and imagination to craft new and innovative solutions to persistent and complex human challenges.

NHI was established in 1979 in response to these developments. A community showing the effects of a declining civic sector, low participation in community and public policy, and the lack of organized structures to help guide community life could hardly be overlooked without also being aware of the consequences to all of society. NHI decided to direct its attention to a large and often overlooked set of community needs. Its core mission became one of strengthening a weakened and fragile leadership infrastructure in urgent need of fresh, new supply sources of skilled and

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Crafting new thoughts, new strategies, new leaders for the 21st century Latino community

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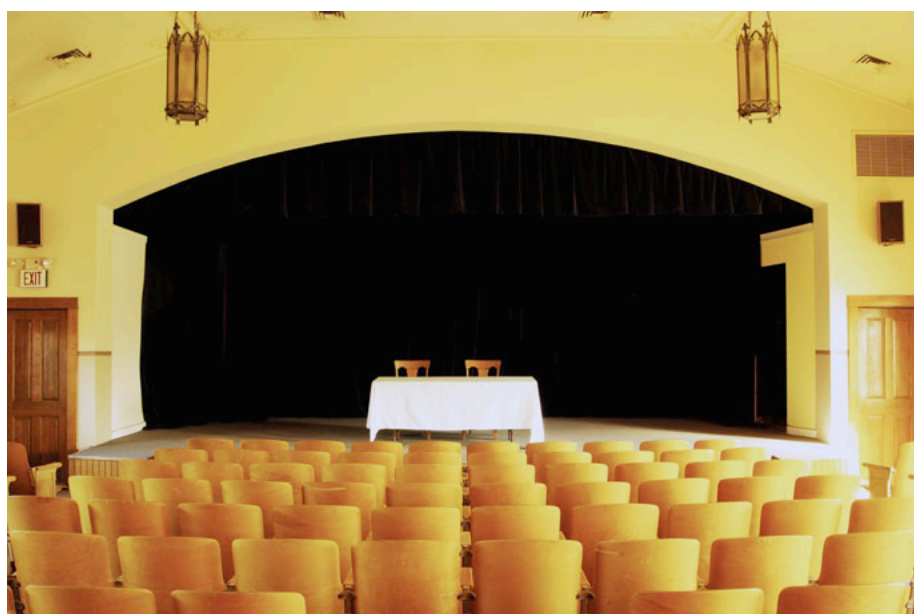
History of the Great Debate

The Young Leaders Conference is the oldest youth leadership project of the National Hispanic Institute, dating back to 1981 in Austin, Texas, two years after the organization was founded. In 1985, the first pilot Great Debate was unveiled at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. At the time there were only three teams. They included Austin, Houston, and the Texas Rio Grande Valley. RGV won the first test tournament.

For the next three years, the Great Debate lay dormant until 1989, when the tournament was taken to St. Mary's University in San Antonio under the direction of Nicole Nieto-Sada. Houston won First Place in a tournament that included Houston, El Paso and Lubbock-West Texas. In 1990, the University of North Texas became the host site. By then a small contingency of participants were present from Austin.

In 1991, Austin College in Sherman, Texas became the official host of this tournament where it currently remains as the largest ninth grade Latino youth program in the nation. During this time, the Great Debate has expanded to other regions of the nation.

In 1995, Carlos Hernandez took the program to Chicago at DePaul University. Afterwards in 1999, Chris Nieto took it to the University of New Mexico where the YLC was expanded to include teams from Colorado and Arizona. It was also through Chris Nieto that the first six-day YLC program was conducted at Sul Ross State University for rural students from the Texas Big Bend area, followed by Julio Cotto who convinced Villanova University to become the host institution for



the Northeast YLC. Lydia Ruelas, who worked as an NHI summer intern, played a similar in convincing Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois to host the Midwest YLC with Nicole Nieto-Sada taking the Lake County YLC to DePauw University in Greencastle. In 2007, Washington State University became the fourth six-day host for students from Washington State, Oregon, and northern California. These combined efforts have together made the Young Leaders Conference the largest high

school youth project of the National Hispanic Institute. Today this project involves 1,200 ninth grade students from over 12 states.

For the first time in its history, 30 students from Panama in Central America will compete in the Great Debate as a result of international outreach efforts by Hector Lopez and the support of Villanova University.

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The Great Debate Tournament Schedule

Day One

The Texas Great Debate Tournament starts immediately after students arrive on campus between 12:00pm and 2:30pm. After registering, getting their room assignments and meal cards, students go to the cafeteria for a page and a half response to a 20 minute essay question. The essay response is gathered, evaluated, and assigned a point value that goes towards the overall team total points.

A rally meeting is held at 5pm in the university auditorium to officially welcome the students, talk about rules and set the standards of conduct for the tournament. Dinner follows at 7pm in the student cafeteria. Final team strategy meetings are held later in the evening, while other activities take place such as judges training, parent chaperone training, and organizing the final administrative requirements of the tournament. Lights out for the evening takes place at 11pm.



Day Two

The tournament begins promptly at 7am with breakfast, followed by the tournament at 9am at the assigned rooms posted at the tournament headquarters. Contestants are required to be familiar with the campus so that they may find their debate rooms and be ready to compete at least 10 minutes prior to the contest under the supervision of a student judge who determines winners in accordance to scoring sheets issued by the National Hispanic Institute.

All contests, irrespective of the debate category, compete in four consecutive rounds. The individual point totals per contestant determines who advances to the Sweet Sixteen. Contestants who do not advance to the Sweet Sixteen are automatically placed in Adjudication where they compete as teams of contestants in the consolation rounds of the tournament. By the end of the second day, announcements are made by the tournament director in the university auditorium in the presence of all students that officially designate the Sweet Sixteen contestants. After individual team strategy meetings are held and preparations are completed for the day, lights out policy is observed at 11pm.

Day Three

Day three begins promptly with breakfast at 7am, followed by the Sweet Sixteen and Adjudication contests. At this point, all contests are single-elimination with only the winners advancing. Similar to the initial opening rounds, points accumulated either through the Sweet Sixteen or Adjudication rounds count towards the overall team totals and consideration for the team Silver Cup. During the third day, the team cultural exhibits also go on display as judges view each entry to determine First and Second Place finishes for announcements at the end of the tournament. Students who advance to the finals perform in front of the entire audience of participants, volunteers and parents who come in for closing events of the Great Debate. After dinner at 6pm, all individual contestant points are accumulated, including points from the essay question, to announce individual winners and the recipient of the team Silver Cup. An adult-supervised campus victory celebration follows immediately after the conclusion of the tournament with lights out extend until midnight after a door-by-door room check by parent chaperones. The winning team earns the privilege of taking the Silver Cup back home for one year, while First Place, Second Place, and All-Star recipients are automatically invited to the annual National Great Debate held in Austin during November for all student finalists from eight regions across the nation.

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The Great Debate Tournament Schedule Continued...

Day Four

The final day of the Great Debate begins with a breakfast between 7am-8am. Contestants are required to pack their individual belongings, turn in their room keys, and undergo a "room clearance check" before being officially check-out. A final participant meeting is held in the university auditorium for final remarks, recognition of staff and adult volunteers. With the exception of NHI senior staff and summer interns who remain behind to pack program equipment and conduct final room checks, the campus is cleared by all participants 1pm.



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Lessons to be Learned

A Message from Ernesto Nieto

The National Hispanic Institute has clearly defined goals and messages that are intended for all ninth grade participants. In other words, the tournament itself fulfills a purpose in the development of young people. Below are the lessons that students will hear repeatedly as they prepare for a competitive encounter that they will remember for years.

Commitment to intellectual rigor is one of the fundamental requirements of knowledge accumulation and skill development that all successful students must pay in order to compete and operate at the top. *There are no short-cuts to knowledge and skill development!*

Long-term focus and a strong sense of self discipline are two of the most essential behaviors that lead to individual success. *Staying with it despite the requirements of time is the only way!*

Competition is an important means of not only measuring individual readiness to compete with equally talented peers, but also identifying weaknesses that require improvement. *Everyone needs a ruler to measure self progress!*

The ability to use words to construct and deliberate thought is a vital leadership tool in conveying complex concepts in a world of competing ideas. *The more words you know, the easier it is to express yourself!*

Losing when you least expect it is tough on the soul, but vital to your resiliency and willingness to continue. *Getting up off the mat when knocked down describes a true champion!*

Success is not so much a personal accomplishment, but instead a measure of the individual's capacities to serve others. *Changing lives is how you determine your value to society!*

How well the individual performs in life reflects how much others have invested in time, energy, and support. *Be humble in your achievements and thank those who are helping you along the way.*

Ernesto Nieto
NHI President and Founder

National Hispanic Institute Facts

- **Over 66% of NHI Alumni plan to pursue graduate studies in medicine, law, business, communication and natural sciences.**
- **NHI continues to celebrate Over 28 Years of Latino leadership training.**
- **98% of NHI Alumni enroll at 4-year colleges after graduating from high school**
- **Approximately 90% of all students complete their undergraduate degree within 4 to 5 years**

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The Four Leadership Competencies For High School Age Youth

High school age youth who participate in leadership programs of the National Hispanic Institute participate in four areas of skill competency that begin in the 9th grade and continue through high school graduation. Participation in these four areas of development represents NHI's initial first-step installment in widening and strengthening the base of leadership in US Latino community life. These four steps include the following:

COMMUNICATE

At the 9th grade level, the emphasis is placed on strengthening student communication skills and competencies through a leadership training format that also broadens participant knowledge and understanding of current Latino community issues and trends. The debate structure employed by NHI allows teams of participants from different cities and regions of the nation to engage in healthy competition events that take place on different college campuses with similar age peers. Top performers receive special recognition for outstanding performance and are accorded the opportunity to compete at the national level. In addition to expanding the social network of students with peers who also value education, the experience of the Great Debate significantly improve student verbal skill development that invariably shows its value in their classroom performance and higher test scores on college entrance examinations. It is in understanding communications as an instrument for community change and advancement, however, that students gain important insight. For in realizing the role that communications plays in transmitting concepts to others that they also learn to appreciate this tool a fundamental requirement of community leadership.

NAVIGATE

Students in the 10th grade participate

in different game scenarios that strengthen their awareness of they must learn to effectively navigate in order to reach personal and community goals. While a legislative format is used for training purposes, students who participate in this rigorous eight day experience walk away with a much larger appreciation and understanding of social systems and the skills they need to acquire in order to operate at the top. More important, they are introduced to a concept of thinking and social perspective that allows them to take greater control of the outcomes they most wish to accomplish in not only reaching personal life aspirations, but also in serving others through community leadership service.

INNOVATE

In the 11th grade, students are guided to focus strongly on college admissions and especially in attempting to clarify their individual life missions as future community leaders beyond the attainment of college degrees and professional status. Already much more mature than their younger counterparts, the experience of the Collegiate World Series serves to remind the students about the seriousness of entering the adult world only a few heartbeats away. The CWS becomes the means through which they are able to imagine the future, gain personal insight into the social landscape that they must maneuver, and begin the process of self crafting a future

through which they may individually gain a sense of social relevance and human purpose consistent with their values and beliefs.

INTEGRATE

A month away from home and the United States forms the final step of leadership training for NHI youth. Whether they spend this time immediately after high school in South America, Central America, or Mexico, this final high school experience allows students the opportunities for long-term personal reflection and community social analysis. In addition to improving their capacities to speak Spanish and interface with young people their age who look similar but may view life differently, the Abroad Living Experience of the National Hispanic Institute contributes to the students sense of readiness for independent life and decision making before entering their freshmen year of college. Being away from home and friends strengthens their self identity and removes any remaining questions or doubts that they may have regarding their abilities to thrive in unfamiliar surroundings. Going away to college becomes a challenge that they no longer fear. To the contrary, they learn to expect themselves to be ready for the rigors of the academic world no longer depending on others to guide the way.

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Parent Assurances

We want all parents to feel confident that the student's safety and well-being is the overriding concern of all adults associated with the Great Debate and the National Hispanic Institute, whether professional staff or adult volunteers. Be assured of the following:

Students will be advised that in the event of an unforeseen medical emergency, adult staff of the National Hispanic Institute will immediately seek medical attention at a local hospital while also communicating directly with their parents.

Students will be told that they are NOT allowed off-campus for any reasons. Student needs for toiletries, personal items, etc. are purchased by parent chaperones at local area grocery stores or pharmacies.

Boys and girls will be advised that they will be under the supervision of parents chaperones who reside in the immediate physical areas where they are housed.

Boys and girls will be instructed that they are NOT allowed in each other's living quarter whatsoever.

Both girls and boys will be instructed that exterior dormitory doors automatically shut and cannot be opened without assigned keys or door combination numbers.

Participants will be advised that profanity, roughhousing, fighting, or any other inappropriate behavior either by students or adults are grounds for immediate separation from the university premises.

All participants will be warned that any person found to have alcohol, drugs, or other illegal substances is immediately reported and turned over to local university police enforcement officers.

While NHI provides students with ample opportunities for social interaction, participants will be told that anyone who demonstrates inappropriate

behavior in their interactions with others will receive a first-warning, followed by immediate suspension and removal from the university premises when the warning remains unobserved.

All students will be advised to observe appropriate dress styles in their daily wear, including dances and other student interactive activities, i.e., no short-shorts or other suggestive clothing.

Students will be instructed to take appropriate action in properly securing money and other personal items that they wish protected from being stolen or inadvertently broken.

Students will be reminded to advise their project administrator and assigned NHI staff member of any particular medical issues that require that they take prescription drugs either daily or at particular times of the day.

Emergency Numbers

Chris Nieto
Great Debate Director
512-589-3935

Jose Vidal
Great Debate Onsite Director
210-833-1824

Ernesto Nieto
NHI President and Founder
512-740-3917

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Parent Assurances

Packing for the Event

While the university provides students with housing, food, and facilities for the Great Debate at no cost to parents, each student in attendance is advised to bring the following with them:

Personal Toiletries- dental care accessories, soap, personal towels, hair brushes, combs, etc.

Linens- For single beds, pillows, and blankets

Business Attire- two day clothing for the debates that include sports coats or suits for boys, including ties, and shirts, while girls are asked to prepare the same, i.e., business attire for two days that include closed pointed shoes, hose, appropriate blouses, etc.

Two-day Casual Wear- for boys and girls during the initial opening of day one and the final closing on day four, to include blue jeans, tennis shoes, sandals, i.e., high school wear.

Alarm Clocks- Very important to meet the rigorous schedules of the tournament.

Cell Phones- Participants may have personal cell phones to communicate with parents throughout the four-day event. They may not, however, have these phones turned on during any program activities.

Money- All meals and social activities are underwritten either by the host university or the National Hispanic Institute. At times, however, students order pizza or may wish to purchase a soft drink during their four-day stay. Parents are asked NOT to provide their children with large amounts of cash to avoid theft or misplacement of money. If students wish to purchase an official NHI shirt, this item will cost less than \$10. A logo will cost less than \$2. All other materials that include student handbooks, folders, supplies, etc. are part of the student registration paid by students at the beginning of the program. Students also need to be prepared to have a \$10 key deposit when they register at the program.



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Parent Assurances

Departure and Arrival Schedules

The departure schedules to the Great Debate tournament and returns back home are set by the Program Administrators at each community site. Please coordinate with the appropriate local persons accordingly. Project Administrators know that team registration takes place between Noon and 2:30pm on the First Day of the Great Debate while departing from campus takes place by noon of Day Four.

The College Register

Participation in the Great Debate automatically makes a young person a member of the NHI family. We want all our youth to have direct access to our nation's top college and university admission offices. The College Register roster below represents both private and public colleges and universities that have an active relationship with the institute and want to familiarize themselves with the caliber of youth who not only plan to enroll in undergraduate studies, but also complete their degree requirements with four to five years. If parents wish to know more about any of these institutions, please contact our office at the earliest convenience possible for a follow-up conversation.

Adams State College	DePauw University	New College of Florida
American University	Earlham College	New York University
Amherst College	El Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey	Northwestern University
Augustana College	Emerson College	Rice University
Austin College	Howard Payne University	Rochester Institute of Technology
Baylor University	Illinois Wesleyan University	Simmons College
Boston University	Indiana University	Smith College
Brown University	Iowa State University	Southern Methodist University
Buena Vista University	Lafayette College	Southwestern University
Butler University	Loyola University Chicago	St. Edward's University
Carleton College	Macalester College	St. Mary's College
Colgate University	Masachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences	Stanford University
Colorado College	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Sul Ross State University
Colorado State University		Texas A&M University
DePaul University		

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Parent Assurances

The College Register, cont.

Texas Christian University

Texas State University

Texas Tech University

Ohio State University

Trinity College

Trinity University

Tufts University

University of Arizona

University of New Mexico

University of Rochester

University of Texas at Austin

University of Tulsa

Valparaiso University

Vassar College

Villanova University

Washington State University

**Washington University in Saint
Louis**

Whitman College

William Jewell College

Yale University

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Project Administrators

Adult volunteers known as Project Administrators have long been the backbone behind the success of the Great Debate for ninth grade youth. These are the individuals who assume responsibility for annually marshaling local youth volunteers to assist with student training, overseeing local training, managing local fundraising projects, securing student transportation, and conducting a host of other behind the scenes activities that often go unnoticed and under-appreciated. Without the loyal and active involvement of these Project Administrators, the Great Debate programs of the National Hispanic Institute would not be possible. These are the individuals who dedicate countless hours of service from their professional and personal to ensure that all students who gain admission to the Great Debate receive the training needed not only to compete at the annual tournaments throughout the nation, but, more important, grow from the experience of participating. All of us at the National Hispanic Institute wish to express our profound gratitude to these community leaders for their years of time and service and especially their commitment to the development of NHI youth.

Mr. Larry Rodriguez and Ms. Becky Rodriguez

Houston Young Leaders Conference
Since 1993

Mr. Francisco "Paco" Gonzales

RGV Young Leaders Conference
Since 1998
"If you are what you should be, you will set the world on fire!"

Mr. Chris Pluta

Summit Young Leaders Conference
Summit, Illinois
Since 1996

Dr. Rene Vela & Ms. Veronica Vela

Corpus Christi Young Leaders Conference
Corpus Christi, Texas
Since 2001

Dr. Hector Gonzalez & Ms. Mary Helen Gonzalez

San Antonio Young Leaders Conference
San Antonio, Texas
Since 1997

Ms. Sylvia Garcia

Tip of Texas
Brownsville, TX
Since 1993-1999, 2008

Mr. Zack Gonzalez & Mr. James Hacker, Head Coaches

Austin Young Leaders Conference
Austin, Texas
Since 2008

Mr. Mike Rosado

Dallas Young Leaders Conference
Dallas, Texas
Since 2006

Mr. Sam Ramos & Mr. Rene Moreno

Seguin Young Leaders Conference
Seguin, Texas
Since 2003

Ms. Ana Lepe & Ms. Lizette Gutierrez

Laredo Young Leaders Conference
Laredo, Texas
Since 2008

Mr. Louis Gonzalez & Mr. Josh Leyva

South Plains Young Leaders Conference
Lubbock, TX
Since 2006

Mr. Tomas Escamilla and Ms. Maluza Escamilla

Dallas Ambassador Young Leaders Conference
Dallas, Texas
Since 2005

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Project Administrators Continued...

Mr. John Cherone

Ciscero Young Leaders Conference
Ciscero, Illinois
Since 2005

Mr. Edgar Palacios

Lyons Township Young Leaders Conference
Lyons Township
Since 2007

Ms. Jessica Delgado

Chicago Young Leaders Conference
Chicago, Illinois
Since

Mr. David Perez, Student Volunteer

Nothwest Suburbs Young Leaders Conference
Hoffman Estates, Illinois
Since 2008

Mr. Robert Gonzalez & Ms. Susie Gonzalez

Pueblo Young Leaders Conference
Pueblo, Colorado
Since 2008

Ms. Tanya Garduno

Colorado Springs Young Leaders Conference
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Since 2004

Mr. Ray Macias

Albuquerque Young Leaders Conference
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Since 2007

Dr. Joseph Villescás

El Paso Young Leaders Conference
El Paso, Texas
Since 2008

Ms. Christina Ozaeta & Mr. Ruben Alarcon

El Paso Mission Young Leaders Conference
El Paso, Texas
Since 2008

Ms. Klarissa Cardenas & Ms. Elizabeth Chavez, Head Coaches

Central Texas Young Leaders Conference
Kyle, Texas
Since 2008

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Our Host Institutions

NHI enjoys special relations with several colleges and universities that play key roles in supporting its program initiatives. For the Great Debate tournament, hosts contribute the cost of housing, food, and facilities at no additional expense to parents. Austin College in Sherman, Texas, under President Oscar Page, has been the longest and strongest supporter of the Texas Great Debate, dating back to 1991. At an estimated cost of \$210 per student who annually attends this summer program as a participant or volunteer, Austin College has contributed well over \$800,000 dollars in services in its seventeen-year history of hosting the Texas Great Debate.

As parents we can never thank our host universities enough for valuing the work being done by NHI and, more important, being both willing and gracious in making leadership training an accessible service for countless families across the United States. So that NHI's 2008 Great Debate parents and participants may be advised of the roles other host and support institutions play in this ninth grade program, the names of our annual host partners are included below. We ask that a small, but well delivered thank you note be sent by parents to the various institutions that support our young people.

Hosts

Austin College

Sherman, Texas
President, Oscar Page
opage@austincollege.edu
Host Since 1993
Texas Great Debate

Washington State University

Pullman, Washington
President, Elson S. Floyd
presidentsoffice@wsu.edu
Host Since 2007
Northwest Great Debate

Augustana College

Rock Island, Illinois
President, Steven C. Bahls
stevenbahls@augustana.edu
Host Since 2005
Midwest Great Debate



DePauw University

Greencastle, Indiana
President, Robert G. Bottoms
bbottoms@depauw.edu
Host Since 2007
Midwest Young Leaders Conference

Villanova University

Villanova, Pennsylvania
President, Rev. Peter M. Donahue
president@villanova.edu
Host Since 2004
Northeast Young Leaders Conference

Adams State College

Alamosa, Colorado
President, Dr. David Svaldi
Host since 2005
Southwest Great Debate

Partial Hosts

Sul Ross State University

Alpine, Texas
President, Dr. Vic Morgan
Rvmorgan@sulross.edu
Tournament Site since 2001
Big Bend Young Leaders Conference

University of Texas-Austin

Austin, Texas
President, Bill Powers
president@po.utexas.edu
Tournament Site Since 2008
Texas Ambassador Great Debate

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Acknowledging our Contributors

Not all parents with children in leadership programs of the National Hispanic Institute have the financial means to participate. Many need help from conscientious individuals and organizations that not only wish to be supportive, but also realize the benefits that students receive from the experience of being involved in community leadership training. The National Hispanic Institute wishes to thank and acknowledge these individuals and organizations for not only making it possible for young people to participate in experiences that transform their lives, but also guiding them to realize that they have many wonderful contributions to make in changing the lives of others as future community leaders.

Manuel Zuniga, Zuniga Investments

\$5,000
Manuel Zuniga
Austin, Texas

American Electric Power

\$15,000
Julio Reyes
Corpus Christi, Texas

HEB

\$5,000
Dya Campos
San Antonio, Texas

University of Texas-Pan American GEAR UP Program

\$42,000
Dr. Martha Cantu
Edinburg, Texas

Austin Cinco de Mayo Golf Benefit Golf Tournament

\$2,500
Luis de la Garza, Chairman
Austin, Texas

Ector County ISD

\$6,000
Adela Vasquez
Odessa, Texas

Kerr Foundation

\$47,500
Waukegan, Illinois

Austin College

\$52,500

Sul Ross State University

Texas Rural Initiative Project
\$47,500

RGV Family Leadership Academy Golf Benefit Tournament

\$3,000

Dr. Rene Vela Annual Golf Benefit Tournament

\$7,600

Texas Education Agency-Gear Up Program

\$74,000

Lyons Township Schools

\$18,500

Subaru Company

\$6,000

Philadelphia Public Schools

\$15,000

Villanova University

\$45,000

Washington State University

\$48,275

Ysleta ISD

\$11,025

Augustana College

\$44,000

DePauw University

\$26,000

Sul Ross University

\$7,500

UT Austin

\$7,500