

EL SOL JUPITER'S NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE CENTER RECEIVES HEALTH LITERACY GRANT FROM FLORIDA BLUE



Right to left: Greg Smith , Executive Director Florida Literacy Coalition, Dora Valdivia , El Sol's Associate Director, and Florida Blue Representative

“El Sol” , Jupiter’s Neighborhood Resource Center , has been awarded a one-year \$5,000 grant for the continuation of its health literacy program to benefit its Adult ESOL students for a third consecutive year..

This grant, awarded by **Florida Blue** and the **Florida Literacy Coalition**, will integrate health and nutrition into El Sol’s ESOL curriculum. The focus is to help students acquire information and resources that will help them navigate the medical system and make informed health decisions.

There is a growing recognition among health care providers and adult educators around the country that limited English language and literacy skills can have a significant impact on one’s health. Health Literacy is defined as the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

According to the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy’s (NAAL) report on the health literacy of America’s adults, 14% of adults have below basic health literacy skills. Low health literacy is especially prevalent among adults who did not complete high school and Hispanic adults, who have lower health literacy than any other ethnic/racial group. In addition, low health literacy costs between \$106 and \$236 billion a year in the form of longer hospital stays, emergency room visits, increased doctor visits, and increased medication, according to a recent report from the University of Connecticut.

The award was officially presented during the 30th Annual Florida Literacy Conference May 7th – 9th in Daytona Beach, Florida

“The support of this initiative reflects Florida Blue’s commitment to helping adult learners, many of whom are new to this country, become informed health advocates for themselves and their families,” said Greg Smith, executive director of Florida Literacy Coalition. “We look forward to working together with “El Sol” to raise awareness about health literacy.”

Dora Valdivia, El Sol’s Associate Director considers the grant has helped the community in many ways: “During our second- year grant, El Sol not only registered 24.5 % more students than previous year but also exceeded its grant commitment in 48.6% by pre and post testing 73 more students than required. Those community members are now more aware about health matters and can navigate the system in a more informed manner. They can also get preventive care instead of being directed to an emergency room in first place”.

El Sol is one of 17 grant recipients selected for the fourth grant year of this statewide initiative. Other recipients include Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group.; Pensacola State College; the Sarasota Y; Tallahassee Community College; Literacy Volunteers of America, Monroe County; HELP of Fort Meade; ECHO; DeSoto County Education Foundation; Manatee Technical Institute; Literacy Council of Sarasota; Collier County Housing Authority, Inc.; the Parent Academy of St. Lucie County; East & West Area Adult Schools/Polk Education Foundation; New Beginnings Family Literacy Program; Literacy Volunteers of Gadsden County, Inc.; and Family Literacy Academy of Lake Wales.