

USC OS/OT Is Part of Latino Young Men's Conference

Several USC OS/OT students and alumni took a leading role in the Latino Young Men's

Conference, recently held on the campus of Rio Hondo College in Whittier and organized by

Therapy Designs, a private OT practice founded by Terry Olivas-De La O and USC OS/OT alumna Vera Arzaga Rubio. The official

mission of the conference was to empower young Latino men toward successful and healthy futures.

Among the many acknowledgements received for Therapy Designs' progressive approach to health and wellness for the Latino population was a proclamation from Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa that it was "Latino Young Men's Mentoring and Family Day," and a visit to the

conference by staff from U.S. Rep. Grace Napolitano's office.

The day focused on shared activities, including mentor relationships that show how to manage challenges by thinking through ways to respond actively and positively. Second-year USC OS/OT MA-II student Rudy



(l. to r.) Lora Woo BS '83 & OTD student, Gloria Romero, Vera Arzaga Rubio BS '86, Terry De La O, David Escorcía, and Heather Kitching MA '02 & Ph.D. student, at the Latino Young Men's Conference (not pictured: Rudy Marticorena, MA-II student)

Marticorena facilitated a breakout session with the young men's fathers and mentors,

addressing how to use shared activities to build confidence, increase social skills, learn healthy coping strategies and foster skill building. Mr. Marticorena also directed an art activity in which the adults and young men placed their handprints together on paper, signifying their commitment

to a shared relationship and emphasizing the importance of goals and the support needed to achieve them. Other breakout sessions on careers in technology, journalism, law and occupational therapy were facilitated by professional Latino men; the occupational therapy session was facilitated primarily by David Escorcía with assistance from USC OS/OT Ph.D. student Heather Kitching.

The young male participants responded positively to the program. Some even inquired about OT as a potential career!

Therapy Designs works with youth in or recently emancipated from the foster care system to encourage a strong sense of identity, analyze how they spend their time, identify personal goals or "dreams" and then map out a plan of lifestyle change to achieve those goals. To learn more, go to www.therapydesigns.com. ■