



PRESS RELEASE

Healthy Women, Healthy Communities is delighted to announce the graduation of **eleven Hispanic women community leaders as Lay Health Promoters**.

This graduation marks the completion of an **innovative, unique, participatory training program** for the Mujer Sana, Comunidad Sana – Healthy Women, Healthy Communities program: **a demonstration project to build community capacity and equitable access to cancer screening for ethno-racial minority women**, funded by the **Ontario Women’s Health Council**. For the next fifteen months, the Lay Health Promoters will be working to raise awareness of women’s health in the Hispanic community, with **a focus on cancer screening**. The project envisions eventual transferability to other ethnic communities.

The Lay Health Promoter training program applied an **innovative approach to developing skills, increasing knowledge, and empowering community leaders from very diverse economic, work and educational backgrounds**. In a unique collaboration among several dedicated partners, the program was certified as an **innovative community college-level course through Algonquin College**. Simultaneously, each graduate **completed two half-credit university level courses at the School of Social Work at Carleton University**, learning about health promotion, peer support, community development, and research methods, **with hard-to-reach populations**. Developed and delivered by a teaching team that combines the skills and expertise of a **community-based research and training firm, Gentium Consulting**, and a **Latin American women’s support group, LAZO**, this training program has been intense and rigorous, consisting of 216 hours of classroom time, held **off-campus, at Centretown Community Health Centre**, plus additional individual and practical work. The students have acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills to begin the next stage of this three-year project, in which **they will participate in lay health promotion, community development and research on cancer screening barriers and needs in the community**.

Please **join us to celebrate their remarkable achievement** at a reception with many members of the Hispanic communities in Ottawa, educational and health sector partners, and other members of the local media.

The Graduation Ceremony is on **Saturday, December 15th, at 7.00 p.m., at the Glebe Community Centre, 690 Lyon St., Ottawa. Refreshments. For information, please call Healthy Women, Healthy Communities: 233-4443.**