

Parent participants in the Multicultural Community Service's Parents as Partners Initiative reported the following: 100% now know how to have a conference with their child's teacher or counselor; 69% encourage their child to read 3–5 times a week; and 85% know what their child needs to do to graduate from high school.

>>> **Multicultural Community Service**

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Multicultural Community Service is a nonprofit community-based organization located in Washington, DC's Ward 1, the most diverse and densely populated area of DC. The organization provides translation and facilitation services, as well as empowerment programs for at-risk youth in Ward 1 (Adams Morgan, Columbia Heights, Mount Pleasant, and Shaw). Over the years, Multicultural Community Service has been successful in reaching and engaging neighborhood youth and, due to its multicultural staff and extensive experience in translation and mediation, has also been able to reach underserved immigrant parents and involve them in their children's education and school.

In 2004, Multicultural Community Service launched the pilot program, "Parents as Partners Initiative/Padres Como Lideres y Compañeros," in collaboration with the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the Council of Latino Agencies, Bell Multicultural Senior High School, Lincoln Multicultural Middle School, and the DC Public Schools' Office of Bilingual Education. The Parents as Partners Initiative trained parents as partners using a curriculum that has proven highly effective with immigrant parents who often feel unwelcome or insecure in their children's school because of educational, language, cultural, and economic concerns. The basic tenets of the Parents as Partners model state that parents are more likely to become involved in their child's education when they understand that they should be involved; feel capable of making a contribution; and are invited to get involved by the school and their children.

The program has been very successful for Multicultural Community Service. Fourteen facilitators completed the training and 45 parents graduated from five different junior high and high schools. Parents now feel empowered to continue meeting on their own to address the issues they feel deserve their attention and, for the first time, they felt they had the tools to be effective teachers and advocates. "Since participating in this program, my child is not as rebellious as she used to be and now she does her homework," reported a parent participant.