A message from AVANCE’s President and Chief Executive Officer

America is at a crisis point. American families are struggling. The failure rate amongst low income minority children is reaching pandemic proportions.

Findings from the State of Preschool Report for 2009 confirmed that the recession was having a negative impact on early childhood education resulting in fewer educational opportunities. This is especially true for lower-income families.

According to a report by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, we should be alarmed. The recent report states that lower-income students should be achieving at higher academic levels and unless we take action, many of these students will fail, “robbing them of opportunity and our nation of a valuable resource.”

In short, America is failing. What are we going to do about it?

AVANCE (a-vahn-ceh) is one of the oldest, largest and most distinguished parenting/early childhood education programs in the country. Research shows the first three years of a child’s life are the most important developmentally. Through our philosophy, “Parents are the first teachers and the home is the first classroom,” AVANCE, Inc. offers an early intervention program to parents with children 0 to 3 years of age. Since 1973, AVANCE has continued to provide innovative education and family support services to low-income families.

AVANCE is also one of the only programs focused on serving Hispanics.

This evidence-based program model is preventative, community-based and two-generation focused.

The free, nine month curriculum consists of weekly parent education classes and home visits with special topics which recognize the great importance of reading, effective discipline and balanced nutrition.

While other nonprofits are struggling, AVANCE is growing. In 2010, AVANCE received the largest grant award in its 37-year history. The $12.6 million award from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation will help expand the AVANCE Program, Unlocking America’s Potential, throughout communities in the United States.

I ask you to join us for what promises to be an exciting time as we help deserving families reach their full potential and prepare children to be successful.

The Heimann Building, built in 1909, is the home of AVANCE’s National Headquarters in San Antonio, Texas. As part of their revitalization efforts, AVANCE successfully restored the former hotel and received an award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Unlocking America’s Potential

One of AVANCE’s goals is to give parents and their children the life-skills needed to change their lives and strengthen their family bonds.

AVANCE builds on the power of the parents as their child’s first and most important teacher.

Strategies for Success

The AVANCE Parent-Child Education Program for parents and their children under the age of three years includes:

- Bilingual Parenting Education Classes
- Adult education opportunities for parents
- Advocacy and support services
- Home visits
- Early Childhood Education

The realization of the potential

AVANCE child graduates are more likely to:

- Graduate from High School
- Attend College
- Have a Career

AVANCE parent graduates are more likely to:

- Complete their G.E.D.
- Improve their employment & financial status

Children Reap the Benefits of Success

Infants and toddlers receive their parents’ daily attention through reading, educational play and positive discipline. This nurturing relationship develops a sense of security at home and the readiness skills to achieve academically.
CHANGING LIVES - CHANGING FUTURES

AVANCE child graduate testimonials

Lizzett, age 15 - “I was in AVANCE when I was 2-1/2 years old. There I learned my colors, my numbers and the alphabet. When I entered pre-school my teacher was astonished. I have always been a top student on the honor roll. Now, I want to become a bilingual teacher because I want to teach kids who have not had the types of opportunities I have had. My hope is to attend Rice University or St. Thomas University.”

Daniela, age 14 - “I was enrolled in the AVANCE program at the age of two. I’m now in the eighth grade taking two high school courses. I’m always on the honor roll and have straight E’s in conduct. I plan to learn more about medicine by attending a high school with a medical field emphasis.”

Veronica, age 15 - “I was enrolled in the AVANCE program from the age of 3 to 4. I am currently 15 years old. I’ve been an honor roll student for 7 years and I am now a class valedictorian. I plan to go to Harvard University and become a lawyer and then maybe a judge. I know that my expectations are high, but with hard work and dedication, I believe I can accomplish this goal.”

A MOTHER’S HEART SPEAKS:

“AVANCE staff taught me how to break the chains of bad parenting after I left an emotionally abusive and physically violent marriage. I was depressed because I was alone raising my children but AVANCE helped me gain back my self-esteem and self-confidence. It was then I began praising my children daily, helping with school and volunteering in their activities. Now they love to read and are advanced in their classes. They are my pride and joy.”

- Irma, AVANCE program graduate - El Paso, Texas
THE VOICE OF OUR AVANCE PARENTS

**Juan, AVANCE Graduate 1984** - “I was one of the first Fatherhood Program participants. Our neighborhood group talked about the problems we all shared: drug use, alcoholism and family violence. The teachers helped us to deal with and find solutions to these problems. I’ve learned how to listen, how to control my temper and most important, how to be patient and understanding with our children. I have been married for twenty-three years and have four beautiful children. My oldest son is studying to be a chiropractor. My second oldest is working on a project at NASA and currently attending the University of Houston. My third son graduated valedictorian from high school at the age of 15; he also attends the University of Houston and hopes to study medicine. My 16 year-old daughter was valedictorian in middle school and is now a Junior in high school taking honors classes. All of the training I received in AVANCE helped my children to be successful in life.”

**Ruth, AVANCE Graduate 1973, Parent of the Year 1998** - “The AVANCE Program showed me how to sow the seed of inquisitiveness, responsibility and an overall sense of high self-esteem in my children. My daughter is a decorated veteran (and) is now following in my footsteps with my grandchildren. I can see that what I learned in AVANCE is being passed on to another generation, thus making the AVANCE Program invaluable.”

**Rosalio and Maria, AVANCE Graduates 2002** - “We feel fortunate to have participated in the AVANCE program. From the moment we started we learned about how to truly care for our children by disciplining them with love, helping them to become confident and providing them with a secure environment. Before attending the Parenting Education Program, we were a one-income family with no prospect for advancement. AVANCE helped us both to find gainful employment, and we credit AVANCE for helping Dad go on to become a licensed electrician.”

**Diana, AVANCE Graduate 2003** - “AVANCE is not only educating me on how to be a better parent/teacher, but it is also helping me get my education and achieve my goals in life for the future. AVANCE has been the best program that I have tried, because of all the other programs, AVANCE not only encourages you to achieve your goals, but also helps you to actually get there.”

**Fryderyka, AVANCE Participant 2010** – “In the beginning I thought of it as a good way for a break because I have a set of twin girls and it gave me an opportunity to get a break to re-group. So it really wasn’t serious for me at first but in the end I don’t even want to say goodbye. I thought it was all about the kids but I learned it was about me, to change my ways to help my girls. It was a wonderful opportunity and I’m going to miss it.”
THE AVANCE IMPACT ON PARENTS

AVANCE INCREASES PARENT SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

- 73% of parents increased annual income
- 64% of mothers who completed high school or GED training attended college or a technical program
- 57% of mothers who had dropped out of school returned to complete their GED
- 44% Increase in high school graduation
- 35% Increase in employment
- 24% Increase in full-time employment
- Before AVANCE, 60% of families earned less than $9,000 annually
- After AVANCE, 62% of families earned more than $9,000 annually

SOWING THE SEEDS OF SUCCESS

AVANCE teaches parents to stimulate the minds of their children. This interaction creates the vital foundation that prepares children to succeed in school.

United Way Worldwide reported that almost half of today's children are not ready to start kindergarten. As many as one-third of American children will start school without the basic language skills they need to succeed. However, Kindergarten teachers rated the school readiness of 90% of AVANCE children as “Average” to “Way Above Average.”

In a 17-year AVANCE reunion, 23 of the 31 women who graduated from the first graduating class, along with their 32 children, participated in a survey which showed:

- 94% of the AVANCE children graduated from high school
- 43% of the AVANCE children were attending college

AVANCE children have graduated from MIT, Syracuse University, Georgetown University, The University of Texas, Our Lady of the Lake University, St. Mary’s University, Oklahoma State University, Texas State University, Baylor University, University of Houston and Princeton University as well as many community colleges.

School readiness begins with early childhood success nurtured by parents

Leading to primary and to secondary school success

Increasing the likelihood for higher education success and/or increasing the attainment of higher working skills


Reach Out and Read: Making Books Part of a Healthy Childhood (March 2010). Reach out and read.
PREPARING PARENTS

Parents who graduate from the AVANCE Parent-Child Education Program create healthier home environments, build stronger families and set the example for success for their children and communities.

In a recent survey conducted by St. Mary’s University, AVANCE parents reported:
• 50% volunteer at their child’s school
• 72% visit their child’s school regularly
• 95% read to their children
• 97% believe college is a part of their child’s future
• 98% discuss their children’s school experiences daily
• 99% check their children’s homework regularly
• 99% of AVANCE parents believe that their child will graduate from high school

A study funded by the Carnegie Corporation found that the AVANCE Parent-Child Education Program had a substantial effect on the ability of mothers to provide an educationally sound and emotionally nurturing environment for their children.

Increasing opportunities for a better paying job
Which helps to achieve a higher standard of living leading to a greater impact on the economy through a higher earned income

SCHOOL READINESS

Teachers from Pre-K to Kindergarten tell us AVANCE children are “Ready for school.” A School Readiness survey, conducted in 2000, shows children whose parents graduated from the AVANCE Parent-Child Education Program are equipped with skills to make the grade. The survey shows:

- 82% Know the alphabet
- 86% Know their numbers
- 86% Understand the concept of time
- 89% Listen and follow directions
- 89% Can express themselves verbally
- 90% Have extended vocabularies
- 91% Are able to sit and attend to tasks
- 93% Can recite songs and rhymes
- 93% Participate in the classroom
- 94% Play or work independently
- 96% Identify Colors
COMMENTARIES ON AVANCE

Others have recognized the value of AVANCE since its launch in 1973. The AVANCE impact has many supporters.

“Compared with a control group, mothers in AVANCE’s program provided a more organized, stimulating, and responsive home environment; provided more developmentally appropriate toys; interacted more positively with their children; initiated more social interactions with their children; used more consistent praise; spent more time teaching their children; spoke more with their children; used more developmentally appropriate speech with their children; and were more encouraging of their children’s verbalizations. The results suggest that as they enter school, children of AVANCE participants will be better prepared to succeed.”

“President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans,” 2000

“Reweaving the social tapestry, AVANCE is helping Latino families in these underserved communities become advocates and role models for their children. By providing a critical support network – reaching out to families in a manner respectful of their dignity and culture – they are helping parents recognize their enormous influence as their child’s first teacher. And in doing so, AVANCE is truly unlocking their potential.”

Susan B. Neuman, Changing the Odds for Children at Risk, 2009

“AVANCE is described as one of the 10 programs that offer some of the most promising ways to help adults help their children and themselves through literacy.”


“Everyday, AVANCE parents are learning to take charge of their lives, putting their families first and finding hope. Parents realize that while nurturing is essential for healthy emotional development of a child, reading is just as important for their intellectual development and in getting them ready for school.”

Infocus, a magazine of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, December, 2000
“Social dynamite is one way to define poor children who lack education and sound parental supervision. “Overwhelmed” is a way to define poor mothers who lack education and self-esteem. How to help the mothers is a question that can overwhelm, too - so much that it may induce paralysis even among the most well-meaning.

To look at a parent-child educational program in San Antonio called AVANCE, however, is to get an answer. You start when the baby is born.”

Hillary Rodham Clinton, It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us 1996

“The success of the (AVANCE) program has been measured in the positive attitudes of the young parents it reaches, who learn that their responsibility as parents includes creating a more nurturing and stimulating environment for children.”

“The goal of the AVANCE - to foster opportunity for families. At AVANCE centers, parents learn to use everyday interactions with their kids - meals, play, bath time - as opportunities to promote learning and positive development. Since AVANCE programs work locally, parents often form strong peer networks within their neighborhoods and communities. AVANCE provides the boost that families need to become successful lifelong learners.”

From Vision to Innovative Impact, W.K. Kellogg Foundation - 75 Years of Philanthropy 2005

LEARNING TO PLAY

“Toymaking was my favorite part of the class. I enjoyed making the rag doll and use it as an educational tool to teach my son about body parts, counting, and colors. These lessons help me prepare him for school.”

Macaela, AVANCE program graduate - Mission, Texas
COME AND JOURNEY WITH US

AVANCE is working to empower families and change lives. We are a pioneer in the field of parent education and we need your help.

“AVANCE has touched a lot of lives. It has been important to our family and a lot of other families. I am impressed with the 40 years of work AVANCE has been doing. Our family has been involved with AVANCE for about 30 of those years and AVANCE’s work has extended all across the United States. Their parental education and their early childhood intervention (program) has now become the model all across the country. Everyday someone is building on what AVANCE has done. Parents overall need help to make sure they can unlock the full potential of their children, which is what we want everyone to do by supporting AVANCE. So, I hope all of you will help by volunteering or donating. Just sign on to AVANCE.org. Remember, this is about unlocking the potential of America’s families and strengthening families through the great work of AVANCE.” (from AVANCE Soup with the Cisneros)

Henry Cisneros, Former San Antonio Mayor, 10th United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and Executive Chairman of CityView’s Board of Directors

“As a child of immigrant parents I learned of poverty and social injustice from an early age. Through the inspiration of my father I have been committed to make a difference in the lives of those with little or no resources. Today, AVANCE is my number one priority because I believe this organization truly changes lives. I gave 1 million dollars to establish an AVANCE chapter in my hometown of Waco, Texas. Now I ask you to make a financial commitment to help those in your own backyard by supporting AVANCE.”

Bernard Rapoport, Founder of the American Income Life Insurance Company and the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation

To bring the AVANCE Program to your community please call 210-270-4630 or email info@avance.org
The promise of AVANCE is Alive

“My daughter and my granddaughter are success stories because I was an AVANCE graduate in 1983. AVANCE was a life-saving instrument to me. Now, as a staff member at AVANCE I am making a difference helping others to succeed in life.”

Barbara, San Antonio, Texas