



Continuing to Reach Out (and Dance) in California

The Reach Out program (which we wrote about in the summer 2005 article, [Dancing to Defer Diabetes](#)), like the Rural Monitor, recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The all-volunteer organization in Lake County, Calif., continues to sponsor exercise programs like family walking groups, and Zumba and dance classes, as well as weight loss/diabetes support groups to prevent and control obesity and diabetes. In addition, it provides advocacy, social services and referrals to health care providers for underserved families with chronic diseases. Although their federal (HRSA) funding ended in 2006, the program has continued to grow and succeed by moving under the wings of the [Sunrise Special Services Foundation](#) (SSSF) and partnering with hospitals, community health agencies, churches and tribal governments. Most its services are provided by promotores (community health educators).



The Reach Out program in California sponsors fun activities like this Zumba class, in addition to support groups and social services advocacy.

“Reach Out helps people in the community take control of their own health,” said Annie Barnes, (volunteer) SSSF Executive Director. “When they do that it empowers them. They make the change, and it works for them and their family. It’s part of the total picture—mind, body and spirit. It works because it looks at

the total person.” In addition, the promotores trained through the program have become empowered, Barnes said, “to take steps to go into avenues and paths that they never thought would be possible because of language skills or education. They have gotten the skills and training to speak and advocate for those in their communities who don’t have those skills.”

The Rural Monitor is published by the ***Rural Assistance Center***. For additional copies, or to subscribe:

Phone: 800-270-1898

Email: info@raconline.org

Internet: <http://www.raconline.org>

© 2012. Rural Assistance Center. All Rights Reserved.

Reprint Policy: Articles, photos, and charts appearing in the Rural Monitor may be reprinted with the permission of the Rural Assistance Center and proper citation. For permission, please contact ksande@raconline.org.