

Amigos are here to help

BARBARA J. TWIGG
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Amigos Internacional is the only agency in Wilmington specifically targeted to the Latino community, which is estimated to be between 5,000 and 7,000 people locally.

"There is no other group geared to just helping the Hispanic population," said Lucy Vasquez, founder and executive director. "I began it myself voluntarily in August of 1999."

The Latino population statewide is growing by at least 16 percent each year. Vasquez saw the need, the void, and began to fill it. "I started in the spare bedroom in my house here in Wilmington," she said. "Originally, I wanted to help the non-English speaking Latinos with hurricane preparedness."

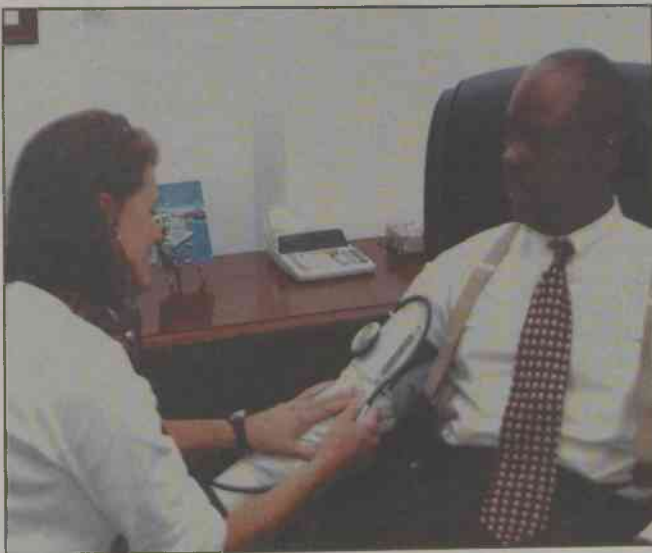
"They didn't speak English, so they didn't even know a hurricane was coming. There are no Spanish language television stations here, so they didn't know what was going on," Vasquez said. "They thought maybe there was a work strike that was closing the stores."

One of the first things Vasquez did was set up a hotline. "We were just in time. Hurricane Floyd hit right after we opened. We were far busier than we expected to be in our first weeks."

Vasquez, who was born in Los Angeles, concentrated first on getting the information out to the Latinos about a hurricane preparedness kit. "We held workshops telling them to stock up on bottled water, canned food, flashlights, batteries and first aid items. We told them where shelters were located. Anything we thought would help."

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What UNCW has to offer students



MPA Caesar C. Ross III has his blood pressure checked by registered nurse Catherine A. Colborn at the Student Health Center.

ALISHA GORE
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

UNCW provides a wide array of services for students. These services include Friday night films, concerts, and counseling services, among others. However, many students are not aware of many of the services that are offered. Some on-campus organizations are currently taking or have already taken action to inform students about the services that they offer. Earlier this year, for example, the Student Government Association sent out a survey informing students of programs offered by the SGA.

"We offer a lot [like] discounted faxing," Jessica Madden, SGA at-large representative said.

SGA and other on-campus organizations were busy informing students of the services that they offer

at the annual Involvement Carnival held on Aug. 25. Representatives from many on-campus organizations, as well as representatives from area businesses, encouraged students to participate in their programs. Students had the option of learning more about organizations that were of interest to them.

The Involvement Carnival provided an opportunity for first-semester freshmen and transfer students to learn about all of the services and programs that UNCW has to offer. One program that is directly geared to freshmen is the Protégé and Leader Program.

"The Protégé and Leader Program was developed by the Office of Campus Diversity to help provide a welcoming and supportive environment at UNCW for freshmen

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From the convoys to the classroom

JACLYN THOMAS
CORRESPONDENT

As students all over the 50 states return to college this fall, they could be among our war heroes.

It may be hard to grasp the concept that men and women returning home passed up college in order to fight the war on terror.

Michael Heling joined the United States Marine Corps before he had even graduated high school in 2000.

"While my buddies were buying college stuff, I was in boot camp, and buying, you know, GI Joe stuff," Heling joked. Many active duty military enlist in the military straight out of high school.

Military recruiters offer hefty incentives. While most enlist to receive aid for college, Heling claims, "The money will be nice, but if I went to college right after high school, I would never be as driven as

I am now."

According to Tim Ring from UNCW's Veterans Affairs office, "Veterans receive every imaginable form of aid, from Pell to loans to scholarships, as well as their associated benefits, depending upon which program they fall under."

The financial aspect may be far less mind-boggling than the actual transition from soldier to scholar. Soldiers don't have to fear that the alarm clock in the morning is a warning of an enemy attack, but for many, readjusting to a civilian life can be difficult.

After being stationed in Camp Lejeune, NC, for four years, Heling wanted to attend UNCW, but returning to his home state would mean more tuition reimbursement. He returned home to Wisconsin, and will be a 23-year-old veteran and freshman.

"I guess I never thought about it. Talk about an oxymoron: too young to be a vet, too old to be a freshman, yet I am both," he said jokingly.

"Students who fought in Iraq tend to be more open-minded about the war, and when they start thinking about the justification of being there, I think they see both sides with a lot of clarity," said professor Paul Sum, who teaches international politics at University of North Dakota.

"In fact, many of the younger vets are intent upon getting a degree when they get out of the service and do what they need to do to make that happen," Ring said. There are many reasons for their desire to go to college, but Heling has his own thoughts.

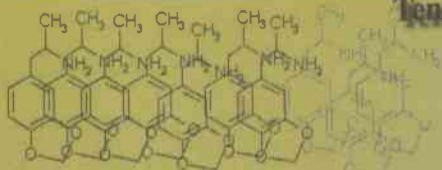
"I take nothing for granted. I learned a certain meaning of discipline that will push me through anything, and also the reality of my

decision when I was sent to fight terrorists at age 19 in Afghanistan."

There are currently 250 people at UNCW utilizing veterans' educational benefits of some kind.

"We really do not break down the vets into categories of having served, but service members who have been on active duty make up the largest portion of our vets. Some have served four to eight years and decided to separate, putting them in the 23-28 year old range," Ring said.

While the thought of a fellow classmate being a battle-hardened veteran may be bit hard to grasp, the convoys returning shoreside are making their way back into daily life in every possible way. Veterans Day, November 11, may hold special meaning for many more students this year.



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