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IDRA, Partners Provide South Texas Families Tech Support for Distance Learning During COVID-19 Crisis for Virtual Classroom

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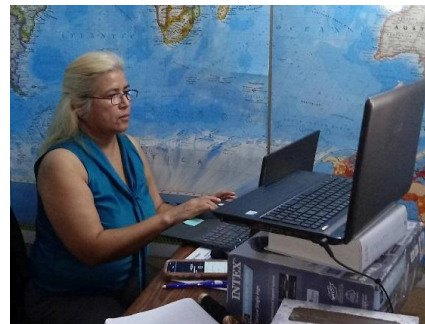
San Antonio, May 14, 2020 - IDRA launched a partnership with two community-based organizations in the Texas Rio Grande Valley to help Spanish-speaking families navigate virtual classrooms while schools are closed due to COVID-19.

Mentors from the College Scholarship Leadership Access Program (CSLAP) provide tech support to members of ARISE, a grassroots organization that promotes empowerment through education and part of IDRA's Education CAFE network. ARISE volunteers connect families with CSLAP mentors, who are graduates of PSJA ISD with computer, software and technical expertise on online learning platforms. Each mentor holds office hours during which they provide support over Zoom or by phone.



"We are proud that ARISE - the very first IDRA Education CAFÉ - is again innovating to help close the digital divide in a region facing some of the most troubling challenges with access to internet and computer devices," said IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno. "Education CAFÉs support the leadership of parents, grandparents, siblings and neighbors - all of whom are critical custodians of children's academic success."

To request free tech support assistance, families and students in the lower Rio Grande Valley of south Texas may contact Vicky Santana, ARISE education coordinator, at 830-719-7273.



While families must stay home, IDRA is working to:

- Survey parents on their children's educational needs during this stressful and isolating period;
- Establish a phone network for parents to help reduce the sense of isolation with a focus on continuing the education of their children;
- Help organizations, who traditionally provide services through home visits, in-home meetings or meetings in community spaces, transition to serving families with virtual and other tools they can currently access; and
- Assist parents sustain a virtual network through devices and apps available to the most isolated and underserved communities.

"At difficult times we are faced with all kinds of challenges," said Lourdes Flores, ARISE executive director. "We cannot sit back and expect that we cannot involve ourselves. Our children need our support, creativity and leadership to provide the assistance they need to succeed in school. It's time to make connections, build bridges and combine forces to make our community strive."

ARISE (A Resource in Serving Equality) is a grassroots organization with locations in South Texas colonias (unincorporated small communities) with staff and volunteers who work in their neighborhoods to better the community and support the emerging leadership.

"When communities work together to educate their children, we all prosper," said Thomas Ray Garcia, CSLAP executive director. "Connecting CSLAP mentors to families has enabled students' distance learning to continue unabated during these trying times."

The **College Scholarship Leadership Access Program (CSLAP)** is a nonprofit organization that hosts college access workshops at local high schools and provides near-peer mentorship for graduating students.

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We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.