

Trinity College

Trinity College Digital Repository

Community Learning Research Fellows

Center for Hartford Engagement and Research

2019

Cultural Variation in Parents' School Engagement: Evidence from the Jubilee House

Jackie Monzon

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/clrf>

Recommended Citation

Monzon, Jackie, "Cultural Variation in Parents' School Engagement: Evidence from the Jubilee House" (2019). *Community Learning Research Fellows*. 14.
<https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/clrf/14>



Cultural Variation in Parent's Schooling Engagement: Evidence from the Jubilee House

Jackie Monzon '20

Faculty Advisor: Prof. Stefanie Wong



Purpose

The Jubilee House in Hartford, Connecticut is a non-profit organization that is open year round that provides support services for immigrant and refugees. This project was designed to provide the Jubilee House with data regarding what immigrant parents are already doing to help their children and their needs so that they could improve or add any further support into their existing programs.

Services Jubilee House Provides

- Language acquisition through ESOL classes
- Help with becoming an active citizen
- Establishing sense of community
- Promoting independence
- Support with finding employment
- Resources that help parents support their children

Research Questions

- How are immigrant parents involved in their children's education, and how do their own studies impact their children?
- What practices and supports would be added into the Jubilee Program to promote family literacy?

Competing Stories: Parent Involvement

- Stock Story: Parent Involvement in Schools**
Parent-reported participation in schools (attending meetings, volunteering, serving on school committee, etc. (Lopez, 2003))
- Counter-Story: Immigrant Parents**
Describes challenges that can limit participation in schools, heavy value they put on education, and their personal involvement. (Lopez, 2003)

- When immigrant parents fail to meet the stock definition of what it means to be an involved parent, they are often seen as neglectful, uninvolved parents (Lopez, 2003)
- Different stages of parent involvement regardless of how much time they have lived in the United States... every family has different needs and priorities (Han & Love, 2015)

Challenges Immigrant Parents Face

- Language Barriers
- Cultural Barriers
- Conflicting Work Schedules
- Lack of Transportation

Methodology: Qualitative Study



Classroom Observations



Informal Conversations



Bilingual Interviews with 7 Students
(5 Latin American, 2 Middle Eastern)

Key Findings: How are Immigrant Parents Engaged?

Role in Their Children's Education

- Homework help
- Reading at home in English and native language
- Enrolling kids in after school academic programs
- Story-telling as a method of educational purposes
- Talk to their children about the importance of school

"Yo les cuento a mis hijos historias de cuando yo era pequeña y fui a la escuela. La escuela era mi principal prioridad y sacar buenas notas. Aunque es difícil para mí entender mucho aquí, hago todo lo posible para ayudar a mis hijos con sus deberes."

[I tell my kids stories of when I was young and went to school. School was my top priority and getting good grades. Although it is difficult for me to understand a lot here, I do everything I possibly can to help my kids with their school work] – Jubilee House Student

Aspirations and Goals for Their Children

- Being successful in school (graduating)
- Achieving higher education
- Employment opportunities with professional careers
- Being active citizens in U.S.
- Involvement with community
- Successful transition into adulthood
- Become more successful than them
- Be respected in society

"Quiero que mi hija se gradúe de la escuela secundaria y que vaya a la universidad para que ella pueda tener una carrera profesional para que no tenga que sufrir y estresarse por dinero y el trabajo como yo. Quiera que tenga una vida feliz y cómoda"

[I want my daughter to graduate high school and go to college so that she can have a professional career so that she doesn't have to suffer and stress about money and work like I do. I want her to have a happy and comfortable life] - Jubilee House Student

Values they Want to Teach Their Children

- Golden rule: treating others as you would like to be treated
- Good manners
- Good behavior
- Resilience
- Independence
- Strong work ethic
- Perseverance
- Staying humble and being a role model for others

"Quiero que mis hijos sean respetuosos y educados. Quiero que sean fuertes y independientes, ya que todavía estoy aprendiendo con ellos. Necesito que sigan adelante para que puedan vivir su mejor vida"

[I want my kids to be respectful and well-mannered. I want them to be strong and independent since I am still learning with them. I need them to keep pushing and moving forward so that they are able to live their best life]- Jubilee House Student

Purpose of Their Education at Jubilee House

- Most had professional careers in native country-want to make a life for themselves here by learning language
- Setting example for children
- Learning language so that they can further help their children in schools
- Desire to improve communication with teachers and doctors
- Desire to assimilate into American culture and be an active citizen

"Quiero aprender inglés porque quiero dar un ejemplo a mis hijos de que la educación es importante. Sin una educación aquí, es difícil ser alguien. Solía ser enfermera en mi país, y ahora tengo que comenzar de nuevo. Necesito esto para mí y mi familia"

[I want to learn English because I want to set an example for my kids. Without an education here, it is hard to become someone. In my country, I used to be a nurse, but now I have to start all over. I need this for myself and my family] – Jubilee House Student

Discussion & Implications

Counter-Story: Evidence from Jubilee

Counter-Story: Despite the many challenges that immigrant parents face that limits their opportunities to participate in their children's schools, they are heavily involved in their own ways. Education is important to them, they help their childre at home, and have set long-term goals for them.

Possible Future Directions

Additional Classes

Help with Advocating for Rights in Schools

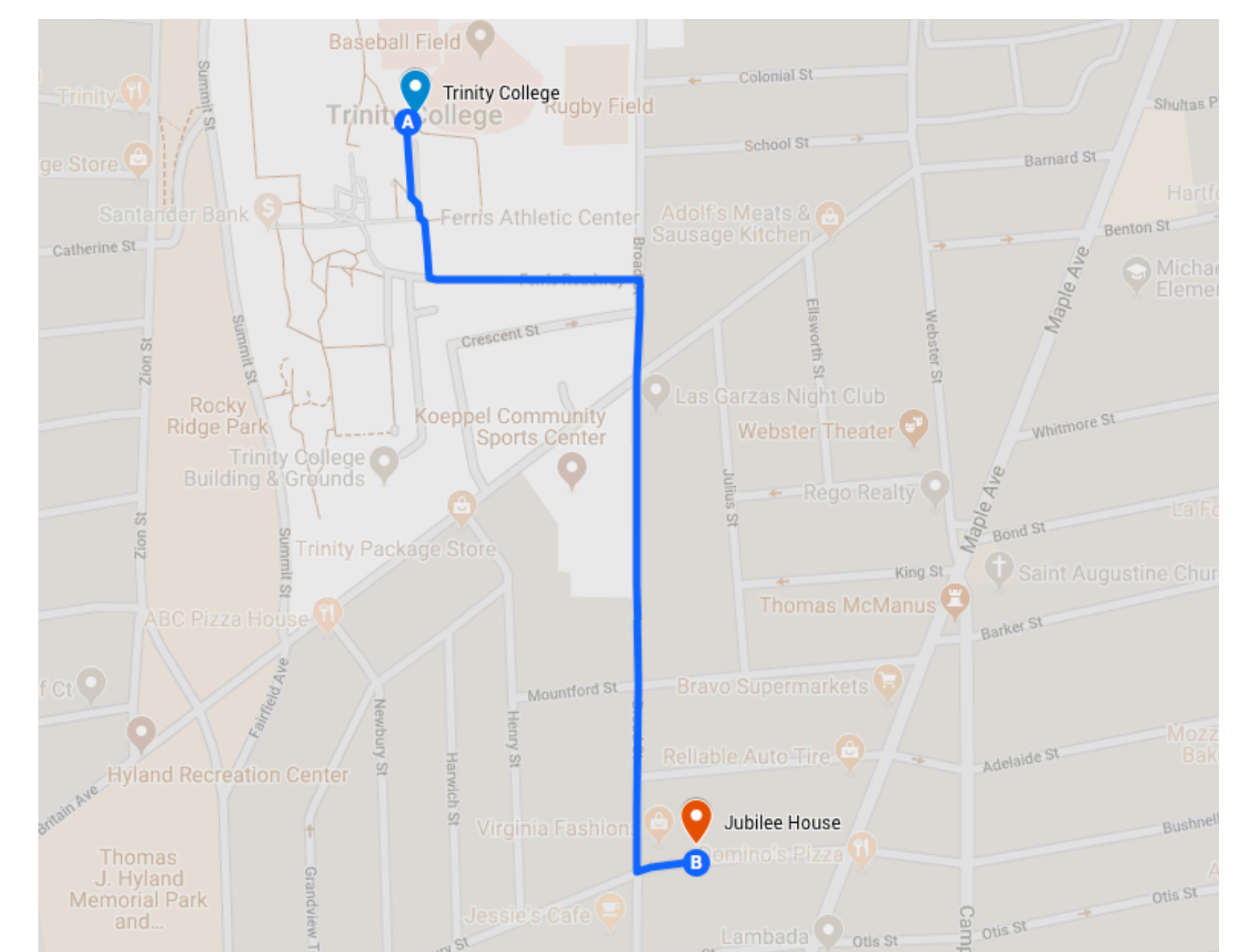
Help Finding Resources for Their Kids

Finding Translators within Schools

Extending Jubilee Hours

Library That Includes Bilingual Books

Location of Jubilee House



Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Professor Laura Holt, my faculty advisor Professor Stefanie Wong, and my thesis advisor Professor Dan Douglas for supporting me through my project. I would especially like to thank the staff and students of Jubilee House for welcoming me and allowing me to do research.

Community Research Fellows 2019