Public School Partnerships for Training Beginning Hispanic Farmers & Ranchers
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How It Works
• A family-based model was developed by the Breaking Barriers program at Texas A&M University Commerce in 2011 to provide Hispanic farmers and ranchers with training in sustainable agricultural management practices and complement their knowledge. Two partnerships between the Breaking Barriers program and school districts in the service area were established in 2012.

• The partnership with District A involved the use of the high school’s facilities during the Spring 2012 to develop a series of gardening and farm welding seminars. The gardening seminars were taught in Spanish and involved the use of a classroom and a greenhouse. The welding seminars were taught by the high school agriculture teacher at the school’s shop with translation provided by a Breaking Barriers staff member. The school cafeteria was used to conduct children’s enrichment activities and support the family-based concept.

• The partnership with District B was established in the Fall 2012 and consisted of the use of two classrooms at the elementary school, one for gardening seminars and one for children’s enrichment activities. A community garden was also established in the school.

Results to Date
• Training for 29 adults and enrichment activities for 12 children were provided. This represented an increase of the participation from the Hispanic community in the extension programs taught by the Breaking Barriers program in the past.

• The relationships between Hispanic families and the schools were strengthened in 2012.

• Hispanic Farmers and ranchers also participated in farm tours and in specialized trainings outside the service area.

Future Plans
• The BHFRDP is seeking additional partnerships with other school districts that would like to participate. The idea is to diversify the seminar topics and learning experiences, emphasizing livestock, forages, and fruit production as well as the continuation of workshops on gardening and farm welding with new partners.

• Create partnerships between providers of training for beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers, including but not limited to Hispanic audiences.

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