

# Maestros sin Fronteras

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Our first math class, Spring 2006

**Maestros sin Fronteras** (Teachers without Borders) is the second LSNA/CSU cohort, formed in January 2006 in the first round of Illinois GYO funding. The goal of the MsF candidates is to become certified teachers with a B.A. in Bilingual Elementary Education and an endorsement in ESL.

The partners in this project are:

Chicago State University  
Chicago Public Schools

Logan Square Neighborhood Association

As with *Nueva Generación*, this project is a true collaboration – the university and community organization share leadership; the university is the fiscal agent on the grant.

**The Cohort:** *Maestros sin Fronteras* has 36 active participants, including 4 men. 3 cohort members are African-American; the rest are Hispanic. Their median age is approximately 35. 22 of the 36 had some college experience before entering the program. All but one are employed, and half are employed in the schools; 17 have dependent children in their households.

Despite their heavy work and family commitments, the members of *Maestros sin Fronteras* have formed a tight-knit cohort. Similar to *Nueva Generación*, the *Maestros sin Fronteras* cohort is very much grounded in the local community and schools. The majority of teacher candidates came into GYO through LSNA's Parent Mentor Program, and CSU professors come to LSNA's school-based Community Learning Centers to teach the courses. While the participants are in class, their children receive top-quality homework help and arts workshops in adjacent classrooms.

CSU and LSNA have built an environment of academic and social support for the cohort on a number of levels. First, the teacher candidates take classes together, which leads to strong, motivating relationships. Second, members of *Nueva Generación* work as peer tutors for MsF candidates. They participate in the classes and actively invite MsF participants to tutoring sessions. This creates a strong network of teacher candidates working towards the same goal. Third, CSU and LSNA work collaboratively to design and implement a model GYO program. This leads to solving problems through strategies such as referring a teacher candidate to the GYO social worker or providing extra ESL support or asking a tutor to check in with the candidate.

In the summer of 2007, *Maestros sin Fronteras* created a new community-based initiative, Grow Your Own Adventure Summer Camp. Seven GYO teacher candidates designed and ran a 4 week summer school for 40 students in a local Logan Square elementary school. In Grow Your Own Adventure, the teacher candidates not only planned and taught the lessons, but conducted formal observations and held weekly reflection sessions.