

## **Mars Hill College Scholar Meeting**

At our last scholar meeting, we had a delegation of students, faculty, and community partners who are working to build bridges between the emerging Latino immigrant community in Western North Carolina and Cheran, Mexico, an area where many of the folks in the surrounding counties have come from. As the new immigrants have settled into our mountain communities, they have enriched the cultural diversity and relationships in the area. There has also been a lot of cultural misunderstanding and even hostility to wade through.

This summer the community-based research program on campus, CARA, filmed local Latino community members sending messages to their families back home. Then the CARA team traveled to Mexico, found the families, showed them the films, then recorded messages to be brought back north. The CARA team also visited educators in both countries to try and discuss the cultural misunderstandings that are occurring (i.e. in rural Mexico, it's completely acceptable for young girls as young as 14 or 15 to marry). The educators both shared ideas of how to best educate these kids who are adjusting to a lot of transition.

So at our last scholar meeting, the agenda looked like this:

- Welcome and Announcements
- Video of Cheran, Mexico
- Discussion by Dr. Tom Plaut, Director of CARA
- Discussion by Aday Niziol, Student Intern with CARA
- Discussion with Ina Vanooteghem Palma, from Centro de Enlace
- Question and Answer Time Around Service Opportunities and Travel To Mexico
- Close