

Herald March 13 2002 Child-Support System is focus of workshop

Parents will have the opportunity today to attend a child–support workshop sponsored by the Connecticut Women’s Education Legal Fund (CWEALF) at the YWCA. But the Agency’s work toward educating parents does not stop with the workshop.

Lydia Velez, child support project coordinator, said she will sign a contract with the YWCA to hold the Building Bridges Program.

CWEALF has two child support projects. One is made possible by state grants and the goal is to empower and educate parents so they can access the state’s support system and advocate for themselves. Velez said this is done through educational training and individual advocacy. Court liaisons are provided if necessary, she added.

"It is all part of helping parents navigate the child-support system," she said.

Today’s program, which begins at 3 p.m., is part of the state grant programs.

Ning Cruzado, case manager/family literacy coordinator at YWCA said the program is open to everyone but that she had referred several people who expressed interest in it. As part of the YWCA's counseling, education and training department she is always on the lookout for programs that will benefit her clients. The most common issue involving child-support, said Cruzado, is mothers trying to seek child-support payments.

"The workshop will teach them about child-support laws, to be aware and what to expect," said Cruzado. "These programs are extremely helpful to the community."

The Building Bridges program differs from today's program, said Velez, because its focus is to develop leadership. Building Bridges is part of a federal pilot grant that works with childcare providers so that they can inform their clients about the child support enforcement system.

"This program lets people understand how the system works to develop leaders," said Cruzado.

Building Bridges will also be offered in Willimantic, Bridgeport, and Hartford. For more information on the program contact CWEALF at (860) 247-6090.