

BEDFORD CO. PROGRAM BRIDGES U.S.–LATINA CULTURES

Around the table, the English and Spanish flows.
Two languages, two cultures—blend as one.

The **gathering of U.S. and Hispanic women** is part of **UT Extension's Culture Club program in Bedford County**. Once a month, the ladies gather to learn from each other and talk about traditions in their countries and ways to help their families. The Culture Club started so Latina women might improve their communication skills and gain more confidence in dealing with their new world.



“We have to make this a welcoming experience for them to learn about our culture and the expectations of our society, and to give them friendship and some women to depend on,” says Bedford County Agent **Whitney Danhof**. “If they have a question, they have a safe place to ask that question.”

Tennessee's Hispanic population grew more than 300 percent in the 1990's, with some of the heaviest growth in Bedford County. UT Extension received a federal grant to start this program because of this population surge.

Sylvia Escamilla came to Shelbyville from Mexico eight years ago. “I've learned different traditions from Mexico and for America,” she says. “Some traditions are the same. Others are different.”



You can view a video story about the Culture Club at <http://www.agriculture.utk.edu/news/VideoReleases/>.

–Chuck Denney

If you have an idea for a TV story, please contact Chuck Denney in UTIA Marketing & Communications at cmdenney@utk.edu.