



El Centro Hispano of Durham is coming of age!

In many Latin American countries a young girl marks her 15th birthday with a traditional *Quinceanera* party – a celebration of the rite of passage from child to woman. It honors tradition, while welcoming change.

This year, El Centro entered its 15th year – a significant milestone for a small, grass-roots organization. As we make the transition from our adolescence, we celebrate our coming of age during an exciting, yet challenging, time of an unprecedented number of Latino families in the community we serve. ECH is currently working on plans for a *Community Quinceañera* celebrating our first 15 years and welcoming our transition to a mature and stable non-profit in Durham. We hope you will join us for this special coming of age party.

The recently expanded and committed ECH Board of Directors is working on several significant projects, including a Strategic Plan to carry us into our next decade. Our staff continues to labor tirelessly. And, as we come of age, you can expect to see us coming into our own. Just as a teenager leaves their youth behind and moves toward adulthood, there will be changes at ECH even though growing up is never easy. Some of our programs are expanding even though we're literally bursting at the seams for space. Our Annual Health Fair continues to be a significant source of free medical information and screens for the local community. And, we will be recruiting a Development Director and hoping to launch an Annual Fund Drive beyond what our membership support and numerous grants have provided thus far.

Most importantly, as we congratulate ourselves on our accomplishments, we also plan on recognizing those individuals and organizations that've helped make us successful during those first 15 years, organizations that believed in us as we believed in ourselves. For that, we offer a special place at our upcoming *Quinceanera* and plan on honoring them during that event. As we move into our second *Quinces*, please join arms with El Centro Hispano in offering assistance to Latino immigrant families. They are experiencing their own coming of age in a new country.

For more information on ECH programs and events please contact us at (919) 687-4635.