



# Mexicanos y HIV

Using deities to teach AIDS info

September 1, 2008 By Max Zimbert

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Our Lady of Guadalupe, the holiest of Mexican images, dates from the 16th century. Among her modern blessings: encouraging immigrants from Mexico to discuss sex and HIV.

Mexicans arriving in the U.S. “[often] don’t know much about HIV,” says Javier Soriano, who created the New York City-based Mexicanos Unidos to help fix that. Using the image of Our Lady on the group’s website eases people’s fears, Soriano says, and “[helps start] a conversation” about HIV and sex.

Another familiar face on the group’s website: their health ambassador, Mexican pop star Bibyanna (see her at [mexicanosunidos.org/video7.html](http://mexicanosunidos.org/video7.html)). Bibyanna also promotes HIV prevention on her weekly radio show.

This past summer, Soriano’s project visited every Mexican health group in New York City, hosting workshops on HIV/AIDS, other STDs and fighting homophobia—offering many immigrants their very first stateside session on sex education.

*For more, contact [mexicanosunidos.org](http://mexicanosunidos.org); 718.573.9179.*

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