

# Father's Day Fiesta encouraging men to accept interactive role

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Martin Corona says he was in jail the day his oldest son was born. He missed the first two years of his son's life — just as Martin's own incarcerated father missed much of his young life.

Corona's wife, Jessica Huerta, raised her son on her own until her husband was released. They now have two sons, Martin Kaos Jr., 5, and Manuel, 3.

She said not only did Corona become a better father, but his entire outlook on life changed after he started talking to Frank Castro, coordinator of the San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign. "I just started really listening to the words they were saying and started to think differently. I didn't want to live the life I had

lived before (as a child)," said Corona, 22. "I never had a father around, and I wanted to change because I had already missed such a big chunk (of Martin Jr.'s life). Frank helped me change."

Castro said the San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign works to positively affirm fathers and father figures in their familial roles as part of its greater mission — to curb domestic violence and child abuse.

The American Indians in Texas-Spanish Colonial Missions (AIT-SCM) and Making Connections San Antonio, an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, organized the San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign. Through counseling, information and access to service organizations, the campaign's goal is to bring honor to those in a fatherhood role, organization rep-

resentatives said.

On Saturday, the campaign will hold its 6th Annual Father's Day Fiesta from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Avenida Guadalupe Plaza, 1327 Guadalupe St. Organizers of the free event encourage men, women and children to come for health screenings and information on resources and to enjoy food and entertainment. Children will be able to participate in activities, get their faces painted and make Father's Day cards.

The event also will feature the Hombre Noble Awards.

"The name of the awards literally translates to 'the noble man,'" said Ramon Vasquez, the executive director of AIT-SCM.

"It is an opportunity for residents and organizations in the community to nominate men

who they think have done the best that they could as a father. There is nothing prestigious about it. They don't have to have accomplished great things in life, they just have to be the best father they can possibly be."

After starting out as a student with the campaign in 2003, Corona now helps counsel other young fathers and organize the Fiesta.

"Martin tells other people about how me and the kids are his first priority and he does everything for us," Huerta said. "He teaches them that it's the right thing to do when you are a dad."

Vasquez said the campaign brings together groups that provide services to males, including fathers, and then links the gaps between them to give the men

what they need to be good parents. He said the campaign is a vehicle to strengthen families for healthier communities.

"There are stepfathers, foster fathers, fathers in a two-parent household, single fathers, teen fathers, surrogate fathers, grandfathers, adoptive fathers and more," Vasquez said. "At some point, almost every man has some kind of role as a father."

"In our society, we need to change the image of fathers and engage and empower males to be good role models by saying that violence and abuse has to stop."

For more information, call (210) 227-3463 or (210) 227-4090 or visit [www.texasmissionindians.com](http://www.texasmissionindians.com).

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## PROVIDING SUPPORT TO FATHERS

Sponsoring organizations of the San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign include:

- American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Missions
- AVANCE-San Antonio
- JOVEN
- MATCH/PATCH Program
- San Antonio National Compadres Network
- Project WORTH
- Southwest Key Program Inc.
- The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute
- The P.E.A.C.E. Initiative
- Making Connections San Antonio, an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation