



# CLEAR

## EXPLAINER & RESULTS

### Church-based Longitudinal Evaluation of AVANCE Results

#### WHAT IS CLEAR?

From 2016 to 2022, Family Bridges launched a longitudinal evaluation of its AVANCE program—an ecumenical family ministry training program aimed at fortifying Latino families and congregations across a range of family and congregational health outcomes.

AVANCE trains lay volunteers within congregations to deliver research & faith-based marriage and family curricula to their fellow parishioners. The goal of the program is to strengthen congregations by building up the families of which they are composed, while simultaneously creating a pathway for increased lay involvement in the parish.

Conducted by an independent evaluator, the study surveyed participants at 8 Hispanic parishes in the Chicagoland area at 6 time points throughout their participation with the AVANCE program. Both participants and volunteers made statistically significant gains in the areas studied.

#### RESULTS

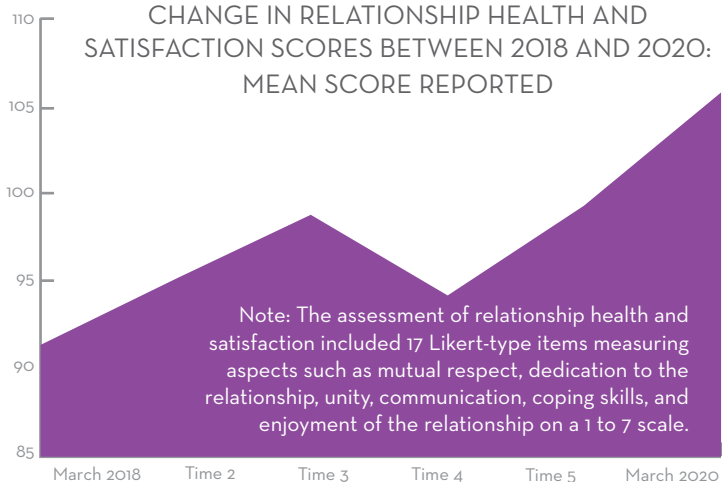
Participants who remained in the AVANCE program demonstrated statistically significant improvements outcomes pertaining to marriage and family health, parish life, and volunteerism. The results were as follows:

#### Marriage & Family Health

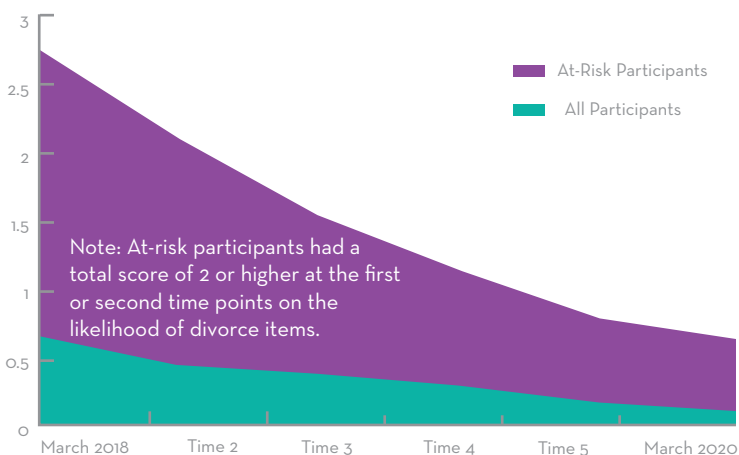
- Increased positive attitude toward marriage.
- Increased relationship health & satisfaction measured by survey items pertaining to mutual respect, dedication to the relationship, unity, communication, coping skills, and enjoyment of the relationship.
- Decreased likelihood of divorce based on items which research has shown are strong precursors for divorce. Significantly, those at highest risk of divorce experienced a significant decrease in likelihood of divorce by the last measured time point
- Improved parenting skills.

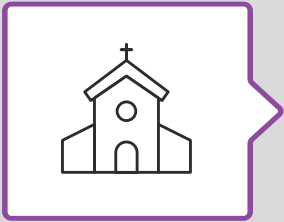


CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIP HEALTH AND SATISFACTION SCORES BETWEEN 2018 AND 2020: MEAN SCORE REPORTED



CHANGE IN LIKELIHOOD OF DIVORCE 2018-2020





### Parish Life

- Increased parish involvement based on items that asked about mass attendance, involvement in other parish activities, inviting others to attend mass, volunteering time to serve the parish, and having friendships and a sense of belonging within the parish.
- Increased satisfaction with the parish's role in supporting marriage. Between the first and last time surveyed, participants demonstrated a large increase in satisfaction with their parish's support of marriage and family life.



### Volunteer Outcomes

Because the AVANCE program focuses on building up lay leaders to volunteer within their parishes, the study asked participants to rate their interpersonal, communication, time management, social, and leadership skills and to respond to a set of items that assessed volunteer capacity, yielding the following results:

- Improved volunteer skills.
- Increased volunteer capacity.



### CONCLUSION

Based on these early results, the AVANCE program is succeeding in its goal of strengthening the health and vitality of participating families and congregations by creating an ecosystem of lay-led marriage and family support within the parish. A key takeaway of the program is that those participants who remained in the program the longest saw the greatest gains.

*To learn more about the CLEAR project or the AVANCE program, please contact: Dr. Alicia La Hoz, [alicia@familybridgesusa.org](mailto:alicia@familybridgesusa.org), (708) 524-1600, ext. 700*