

# COUNTY OF KANE



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## **Kane County System of Care Parent Council Receives Partner of the Year Award**

The Kane County System of Care (KCSOC) Parent Council has been selected to receive the Compañeros en Salud/Partners in Health Partner of the Year Award at their Mission Awards Breakfast to be held December 13, 2023 from 8:00 – 9:00 am at Waubensee Community College in Aurora.

The award recognizes organizations that consistently support the quality of life of Hispanics and other diverse groups of the Fox Valley Area through culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Laura Martinez, Compañeros en Salud/Partners in Health Board Chair said, “Kane County System of Care Parent Council has shown exceptional dedication in advocating for and providing guidance and resources to parent leaders. With their support, the Parent Council is a safe environment to learn and share parenting skills. Their efforts have had a transformative impact on the lives of many parents who are supported and empowered to learn the skills needed to strengthen their families.”

The KCSOC is a coordinated network of community providers and parents led by the Kane County Health Department that includes representatives from multiple sectors including juvenile justice, early childhood, substance use services, community mental health, federally qualified health centers, parent and community supports, domestic violence and sexual assault services, K-12 education, mobile crisis response (i.e. SASS), and parents who have children engaged in the mental health system.

The KCSOC Parent Council was formed to lift parent and caregiver voices in children’s mental health system. Comprised of 20 parent leaders primarily from Elgin and Aurora, Council members are trained in parent empowerment, and bring passion and real-world experiences in utilizing services for their children. The Parent Council advocates for mental health and preventative services for youth that include the views of parents, families, and youth themselves.

“We are here to support and link the community with mental health agencies and support programs,” explained Claudia Serrano, Parent Council member from Elgin.

Several Parent Council members have been trained in the Be Strong Families Parent Café Model. Parent Cafés/Café Para Padres are a therapeutic peer-led intervention designed to increase caregivers’ confidence and increase community connections.

Marisol Luna, Parent Café Support Network Coordinator for the Aurora region explained, “I have learned so much from hosting Parent Cafés. I am making changes in my own family and my children have noticed. I am more flexible and I am listening more to them now. We are all getting along better. I am so thankful for this experience and love sharing it with other parents and helping my community.” Currently, two Cafés a month are held Aurora and Elgin. Most are held in Spanish, increasing the availability of supports available to the large Spanish-speaking communities in Kane County.

“The Parent Council and their Parent Cafés have demonstrated true community engagement and support for the Latino community in Kane County,” said Jason Andrade, Vice President of Organizational Development at Family Counseling Service of Aurora, who nominated the KCSOC Parent Council for the award.

“Parent Cafés increase access to informal mental health supports for parents and caregivers when there are barriers to accessing formal therapy services,” said Kate McCormack, Manager of Children’s Mental Health Initiatives at the Kane County Health Department and Project Director of the Kane County System of Care. “The Parent Café Support Network provides access to Spanish language peer-support services across Kane County, increasing health equity.”

For more information and to register to attend the Mission Awards Breakfast, visit:  
<https://companerosensalud.org/event/mission-awards-breakfast-2023/>

For more information about the Kane County System of Care Parent Council and Parent Cafés, visit:  
<https://kanehealth.com/Pages/Childrens-Mental-Health.aspx>

Compañeros en Salud/Partners in Health, NFP is a grassroots coalition charged with assisting members of the community in accessing appropriate healthcare and social services. More information about Compañeros en Salud: <https://companerosensalud.org/>