



**FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOMES FOR THE AGING**  
*The FAHSA Innovation Exchange*

***Submission***

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<b>Date of Submission:</b>	<b>May 17, 2006</b>
<b>Title of Innovation:</b>	<b>Celebrating Diversity</b>
<b>Topic for Submission:</b> (Please choose a topic from the list included in the attached submission guidelines which best describes the innovation you are submitting.)	<b>Topic: Staff Retention/Quality of Life</b>
<b>Audience:</b> (Choose one or more, as appropriate.)	<p align="center"><b>HUD Housing Communities</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Retirement Communities (CCRC or fee for Service)</b></p> <p><b>x Assisted Living Facilities</b></p> <p><b>x Nursing Homes</b></p>

1. **Description of Innovation:** Please succinctly describe the innovative program or service, creative idea or best practice and the resulting benefits to your organization or the consumers you serve. Limit the narrative to 3 pages, excluding attachments such as forms.

For a long time, residents have complained about how many foreigners there are in the building. Some residents have been resentful and even been rude to staff making it difficult for staff to care for the residents. We came to the conclusion that the residents needed to see our workers as people just like themselves, and if they did that, the animosity would lessen.

We decided that we would have the residents introduced to the staff members either at a resident council meeting or during some event. We asked staff if they would like to have one day a month to celebrate their country with the residents. The staff ran with the idea and have done an amazing job.

The first country that we celebrated was Bosnia. Most of our residents knew very little of the country except what they had heard in the news. The two staff from Bosnia brought in family pictures, books with pictures, and traditional clothing of their country. They talked about

holidays and prepared food for the residents to taste. They spent over an hour discussing customs, listening to music and tasting sweet and savory treats prepared by staff. The second country we celebrated was Mexico. Once again, the staff member did all the work. They take great pride in discussing their country.

We had five staff from Mexico who did the same type of event. They did bring a large sombrero and took pictures of residents and staff wearing it. They talked about the different parts of Mexico they were from and a video was shown too. The residents enjoyed the food which was authentic (tamales made in corn husks,) both sweet and savory types of food were served, the music was delightful and the staff showed the residents some of the dances done by different parts of the country. The residents had a wonderful time and it has engaged the residents in conversation.

I believe this has been a wonderful program and we will continue to celebrate new countries and staff each month. We will be celebrating the Bahamas next month. The residents truly have changed their view of our foreign staff.

2. **Budget:** Provide information about the annual budget or total cost of your innovation (if a one-time expense) and the number of staff or volunteers used to implement it. If your innovation did not require a budget or staff, please indicate.

The cost has been \$0.00. I would like to give the staff a small bonus for the food preparation of \$20.00. They have not asked nor do they expect to get anything.