

# Congreso Experiences give Hispanic youth a look at schools

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In addition to its focus on evangelism and discipleship, Congreso—an annual event for Hispanic Baptist young people—long has promoted education among Hispanic middle-school and high-school students.

Weeks ahead of this year’s conference, scheduled April 18-20 at Baylor University, six Baptist universities around the state served as host sites for Congreso Experiences that drew more than 600 students.



Gabriel Cortes, coordinator of Congreso Experiences, talked about the importance of living for Christ, not for oneself. (Photo / Isa Torres)

“We have partnered with Baptist universities to give students an overview of the education possibilities they have,” said Gabriel Cortes, Congreso coordinator.

Wayland Baptist University, East Texas Baptist University, Dallas Baptist University, Hardin-Simmons University, Baptist University of the Américas and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor hosted these events in February and March.

First Baptist Church of Weslaco and Iglesia Bautista in Houston also served as host sites for Congreso Experiences in South Texas.

Universities and churches had the freedom to set the agenda of each Congreso Experience and provide students with workshops similar to the ones at the statewide Congreso in Waco, Cortes explained.

While each location's workshops differed, some included classes on how to apply for college, what college life is like and what Hispanics can expect at certain universities, as well as classes on money management and how to develop spiritual discipline while in college, he noted.

Students had the opportunity to tour the universities and hear about what they could study at each of the schools, Cortes said.

Congreso Experiences also provided a preview of what students can expect at the statewide Congreso and also bring some of what Congreso offers to those who cannot make it all the way to Waco, he added.

"We want students to know the opportunities Texas Baptists offer," Cortes said. "Many times, they have not heard about what is out there, and these universities have stepped up to prepare students for the future."

While Congreso aims to empower more students with education, the goal ultimately serves the greater goal of empowering the church to serve more holistically and more efficiently, Cortes said.

"More education brings better equipped leaders," he said. "And with better leaders, you also have a better church."