

Summer session to open Chicano school

A school especially planned for Chicano children will open in Santa Fe this summer with arts and crafts, academic and summer camp programs.

Escuela y Colegio Tonantzin will be based in the Our Lady of Victory Convent of San Isidro parish in Agua Fria.

"The archbishop (James Davis of the Santa Fe archdiocese) donated the building and the land for the school,"

Tonantzin spokesman Juan Valdez said. "We hope to start moving in in May.

"The Archbishop said that the Church would make this commitment to help the people," Valdez said. "Donating the building is a step towards making the church more a part of the community."

Valdez said that the sisters now living in the convent would be relocated to St. John the

Baptist Catholic Church.

He explained that the school will be based on family involvement and that parents will be required to contribute their time if they want their children to attend.

"Tonantzin will be an alternative school," Valdez said. "We will use Chicano methods and stress our own language, values and culture rather than the traditional education

philosophy."

Teachers will be recruited from the community and in conjunction with the College of Santa Fe, Highlands University and the University of New Mexico. Parents will also be used to teach. The school will be accredited through Goddard College and affiliated Escuela Tlateloco in Denver.

"We hope to have a good relation with the community," Valdez said. "We do foresee certain difficulties in gaining acceptance for a Chicano

school. Unless we act immediately however, we believe the Chicano culture will be lost."

"Lots of young Chicanos are trying to learn Spanish and find out about the Chicano movement," he said. "They realize they have lost their language and their culture and they want to do something about it."

Valdez said that the school will produce plays and ballets to draw community interest.

In addition to the summer program Tonantzin will also

hold classes in the fall. Courses will be taught in Spanish and English, with emphasis on Spanish. The school will offer a program for grades 1-12 and an undergraduate college subject.

"We hope to be able to bring back drop-outs and kids who aren't succeeding in the traditional school," Valdez said.

Registration for Tonantzin will be held in May. For further information contact El Comit  Central de los Barrios, 31 Aztec, phone 982-2970.



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