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For Immediate Release:

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### HISPANIC HERITAGE FOUNDATION RE-ORGANIZES TO MEET AMERICA'S PRIORITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL, COMMUNITY SERVICE AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

*Mission to Include Public Awareness Campaign Promoting Cultural Pride, Accomplishment and Promise of Latinos through Role Models*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The Hispanic Heritage Foundation (HHF) has re-organized and will have an even stronger focus on providing a sustainable model for Latino leadership in meeting America's priorities through educational, community service and workforce development programs. In addition, the 24-year-old nonprofit will create a multi-media public awareness campaign called Mi Cultura to promote cultural pride, accomplishment and the promise of what the Latino community has to offer through role models. Also, HHF will work in partnership with other Hispanic-serving institutions to leverage resources in fulfilling the collective mission of moving the Latino community, and America, forward.

“The board of directors, my staff, our sponsors and our entire network of young and established Latino leaders are looking forward to an even more focused and strategic mission in 2010,” said Antonio Tijerino, president and CEO of HHF. “As the Latino community grows in numbers and influence, so does the need for developing leaders who can move us, and America, forward. We have added new elements to our programs to put our young leaders in more effective position from which to lead. Investment in our youth is certainly worthwhile in terms of the future in education, service and the workforce.”

Through a three-pronged approach of leadership development, community impact, and promotion of role models and cultural pride, HHF has created sustainable pipeline of Latino leadership who are leveraged as human capital to positively affect through the following:

- Youth programs (Youth Awards/Community Service, Speakers Bureau, Mi Mentors-Education)
- Workforce program (Latinos on Fast Track, Mi Mentors-Workforce, MiVision.US)
- Public Awareness (Hispanic Heritage Awards, multi-media PSA campaigns, and special events)

**Youth Awards and Community Service** – Since 1998, the Youth Awards have celebrated the achievements of top Latino high school seniors in various categories. The recipients' average GPA is above a 3.5 and are selected on their accomplishments in the classroom and community. They are also promoted as role models for their peers. A teacher is also recognized in each region (Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, San Jose/Bay Area, Phoenix, Chicago, Miami, New York/Philadelphia/New Jersey, and Greater Washington, DC). Don Omar is the spokesperson for 2010. The Youth Awards/Community Service program feeds other HHF programs and network.

Traditionally, each of the recipients was provided with an educational grant but in 2010 the students will have the opportunity to use the funds for a community project for which they will plan, execute and document. The Community Service Project will need to:

- Improve the community
- Encourage volunteerism
- Be shared with other young leaders through social networks and best practices

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**Speakers Bureau** – Research has found that Latinos needing guidance outside the home more than any other segment of population in terms of education and career, and various issues such as financial literacy, healthy lifestyles. This outreach program features the HHF Network visiting grade schools, high schools, and community centers to provide inspiration and a vision for younger Latinos and others to succeed. The “near peer” program reaches thousands of youth and provides role models which stay in contact through social networking.

**Mi Mentors** – Mi Mentors was piloted in 2009 to raise the Latino high school graduation and college attendance rates by mobilizing HHF’s network of young leaders to support high school guidance counselors through a near-peer mentorship program focusing on social, academic, cultural and character development. The program features HHF Network, who is attending college, as the mentors to offset the shortage of guidance counselors (e.g. in California the ratio is 900 students to one guidance counselor). HHF coordinates training, placement and supervision of Mentors through a partnership with the American School Counselor Association, National PTA, among others in targeting high school students with demonstrated potential in need of guidance, support and a vision for graduation and navigating college application process. Mi Mentors is measured through grades and attendance along with surveys.

**LOFT (Latinos on Fast Track)** – The eight-year-old workforce development program was created by HHF in partnership with Hispanic College Fund to systematically identify, prepare, place and retain emerging Latino professionals on a management track in key industries to bolster America’s workforce and compete globally in the future. LOFT has provided thousands of candidates to Fortune 500 companies and government agencies. LOFT is unique because of:

- ❑ Selective Identification – HHF’s Youth Awards and HCF’s Scholars serve as the main feeder programs (network includes more than 75,000 members ranging in ages 18-25);
- ❑ Preparation – industry-specific orientations, on-line tutorials and materials; workshops; interview prep; resume writing; and webcasts from Latino experts in fields
- ❑ Facilitation – LOFT-facilitated mentoring guidance to provide ongoing support and communication;
- ❑ Retention – consistent follow up with candidates working toward full-time hires on a management track;
- ❑ Measurement – informal surveys and reporting;
- ❑ Sustainability – regional and national special events including conferences and career fairs, social networks, on-line sharing of experiences and knowledge, webinars, leadership training, workshops;

**Hispanic Heritage Awards** – The Hispanic Heritage Awards were developed in 1987 by a White House task force commemorating the creation of Hispanic Heritage Month. The Awards honor notable Latinos who have distinguished themselves in various fields and made a positive impact on America. The Awards are considered the highest honor by Hispanics to Hispanics in America. On October 13, 2010 at the Capitol Visitors Center on Capitol Hill, top Latino leaders in various categories will be honored with an influential audience of more than 500 including leaders of 37 national Hispanic organizations who co-host the program. The Awards are unique because community leaders, educators, physicians, elected officials, business leaders and even astronauts have stood alongside cultural stars such as Placido Domingo, Gloria Estefan, Juanes, Mana, Tito Puente, Antonio Banderas, Rita Moreno, Ricky Martin, Celia Cruz, etc. During the ceremony, the hottest Latino performers pay tribute to the Honorees. The program has been traditionally aired as a TV special.

**Mi Cultura** – In an effort to shatter negative stereo-types, HHF will launch a multi-media public awareness campaign in the summer of 2010 featuring celebrities, past Hispanic Heritage Awards Honorees and young leaders. Special events, PSAs, and other platforms will support the effort along with educational tools to promote cultural pride, accomplishment, and role models. More information will be available on this effort in the spring.

Please visit [www.HispanicHeritage.org](http://www.HispanicHeritage.org) for more information on how to support Hispanic Heritage Foundation.