

PRESS RELEASE

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HISPANIC HERITAGE FOUNDATION HONORS NATIONAL YOUTH AWARDEES AND TEACHER AWARD RECIPIENT AT SPECIAL CEREMONY IN KANSAS

CSI Miami Star Adam Rodriguez to Receive Inspira Award

WASHINGTON, DC— On Wednesday, **July 9**, the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (HHF) will be joined by national business and community leaders to honor seven high school seniors from across America and an outstanding teacher for their extraordinary leadership in the classroom and community as part of the **2008 National Hispanic Heritage Youth Awards Ceremony**. HHF also will present CSI Miami Star **Adam Rodriguez** with the *Inspira* Award for serving as a role model to Latino youth in the public eye. Last year's *Inspira* Award recipient and Actor Wilmer Valderrama will join the celebration, which will be held at the Sprint Headquarters in Overland Park, Kansas.

The 2008 National Youth Awardees were selected from 10,000 applicants and more than 250 regional recipients from across the United States. Each National Youth Awards recipient will receive a total of \$8,000 in educational grants, a laptop computer, and a trip to Washington, D.C. where they will be recognized on stage at the star-studded 22nd Annual Hispanic Heritage Awards in Washington, DC on October 9, 2008.

The National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award recipients in the seven categories are:

Academic Excellence: **Marcus Andrew Garcia** of Turlock, California – Turlock Christian High School, sponsored by the Sprint Foundation

Business: **Yadira Torres** of San Antonio, Texas - South San West Campus High School, sponsored by the National Society of Hispanic MBAs

Education: **Raquel Goya** of Phoenix, Arizona – Pinnacle High School, sponsored by Southwest Airlines, which is also the Official Airline of the Youth Awards

Engineering and Mathematics: **Grecia Margarita Gonzalez** of La Puente, California – Nogales High School, sponsored by ExxonMobil

Journalism: **Albert Matthew Parisi-Esteves** of Rochester, New York – Brighton High School, sponsored by NBC Universal/Telemundo

Leadership: **Nicolas Esteban Mendoza** of Alpine, California – Steele Canyon Charter High School, sponsored by Sallie Mae, which is also the Official Student Loan Partner of the Youth Awards

Sports: **Sara Louise Egozi** of Miami, Florida – Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School, sponsored by SUBWAY® Restaurants

Selection criteria included academic achievement, community service, category focus, and an essay about the important role that their heritage played in their success.

Through a partnership with the Staples Foundation for Learning, the Hispanic Heritage Teacher Award recognizes teachers for the impact they have made on the lives of Hispanic students. **Sylvia Garza** of Texas City High School in Texas City, Texas, was the Regional Teacher Award recipient from the Houston Region and was selected from a pool of 12 regional teachers as the national awardee. Ms. Garza will be honored as the **National Hispanic Heritage Teacher Award** recipient and honored along with the National Youth Awardees.

"The need for role models in the community and classroom is vital to the success of even younger Latinos, not to mention these young leaders will be responsible for moving America forward," said José Antonio Tijerino, president and CEO of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation. "These seven students and teacher are an embodiment of our mission. Our foundation and dedicated sponsors are humbled and inspired by their accomplishments. They are not leaders of the future, but leaders of today."

The success of the Youth Awards program is predicated by the support of thousands of high schools, community organizations, and business partners. In addition to the category sponsors listed above, the *Inspira Award* is presented by Hershey's. Official Sponsors of the Hispanic Heritage Youth Awards include Allianz Life, Hilton Hotels Corporation, Sallie Mae, Southwest Airlines, Target, and Wachovia. Youth Award Partners include the Hispanic College Fund, *VMe*, and Voto Latino. Hispanic Heritage Foundation Partners and Sponsors include Home Builders Institute, National Association of Home Builders, Lowe's, the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA), Pulte Homes, Sprint Foundation, the United States Navy, and UPS.

Microsoft will be donating software to each of this year's National Youth Awardees as they head off to college.

About the Hispanic Heritage Youth Awards

The Hispanic Heritage Youth Awards were created 11 years ago to identify and promote the next generation of role models by celebrating their accomplishments in the classroom and community. The Youth Awardees are funneled into HHF's LOFT (Latinos on Fast Track) workforce development program, a Speakers Bureau and the Mi Mentors program in an effort to put the young leaders in a position from which to lead. Please click www.HHFvideo.com for an introduction to HHF's year-round mission.

The Hispanic Heritage Foundation, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization, identifies, prepares, and positions Latino leaders in the community, classroom and workforce through national cultural, educational, and career development programs. For more information about the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, please visit www.HispanicHeritage.org.

NOTE: To sponsor the Hispanic Heritage Youth Awards and other Hispanic Heritage Foundation programs please call 202.861.9797.

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