

CARECEN Celebrates 29 years of Providing Quality, Affordable Legal Services to the Latino Community in the Washington Metropolitan Region

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Washington, DC– The Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) will host its *annual Anniversary event, Honoring 29 Years of Legal Services to Latinos: From Refugees to Engaged Citizens*. At this gathering, CARECEN will be celebrating nearly three decades of providing culturally competent and bilingual legal assistance to the Latino community in the metropolitan area. The event will take place on October 7, 2010 at the St. Francis Hall in Washington, DC, from 6-9:30 PM.

Mariela Melero-Chami, Chief of the USCIS Office of Public Engagement, will be the keynote speaker at the event and will highlight the role of community based organizations in providing quality affordable legal immigration services as well as preventing and combating the unlawful practice of law. In her keynote address, Ms. Melero will also speak about recent achievements of USCIS, efforts to reach out and closely engage various stakeholders, as well as implementing outreach and public education initiatives.

Within the last year, CARECEN's Legal Services Program has expanded significantly due in large part to the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Program, which has allowed the organization to have two additional attorneys whose salaries are funded partially through a federal grant. The organization has been able to assist hundreds more families and represent clients in more complex legal issues such as asylum, Violence Against Women Act petitions and removal defense. In addition, they have made huge strides in expanding legal assistance, outreach and awareness of the U-visa program for immigrant victims of violent crimes. "CARECEN is also taking steps to implement a more holistic approach in serving clients by providing legal services that go beyond immigration law such as access to public benefits, and assisting clients with issues relating to consumer and employment law, along with combating *notario* fraud", said Saul Solorzano, CARECEN's Executive Director. "Support from our funders, donors and friends is crucial to continuing to offer all these valuable services," he added.

More than 200 community and business leaders, national advocacy organizations and representatives from local and state governments are expected to attend the event. This year's event is sponsored by: Clark Construction Group, LLC, Tycko&Zavareei LLP, SEIU 32BJ, America Federation of Government Employees-Women's and Fair Practices Departments, Greenberg Traurig, Wilmer Hale, Bryan Cave, Capital Wire PR, AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly, and the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA).

Honoring 29 Years of Legal Services to Latinos: From Refugees to Engaged

October 7, 2010

St. Francis Hall - Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land
1400 Quincy St., N.E., Washington, DC 20017

6:00 PM Reception, Dinner and Live Music
7:20 PM Keynote Address, Awards Program, and Live Music

To RSVP or make a gift to CARECEN on the occasion please visit <http://carecendc.org/CARECENevent.php>

Email_events@carecendc.org, or call 202-328-9799, ext. 13

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