

## NR2010 Dialogue on Diversity Honors IT Innovator and Jewelry Designer in 2010 Quest for Champion Young Women Entrepreneurs

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Washington, DC – Dialogue on Diversity's 2010 Entrepreneurship/IT Conference, set for Tuesday, July 27 at the Capitol Visitors Center, Room HVC 215, on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C., highlights the accomplishments of a pair of one-of-a-kind creative spirits whose whirlwind train of successful Entrepreneurial projects has brought each of them a burgeoning commercial success and has made them, for all their youth, models for women entrepreneurs everywhere. Recognition goes as well to a Mentor of extraordinary vision and power whose advocacy for the economic vitality of small business entrepreneurs has brightened the Washington, D.C.-mid-Atlantic scene for the last decade.

**Cristina Mossi** came to Development Infostructure, Inc. (DEVIS) in 1995; she is now owner and CEO of this phenomenally growing IT firm. Her combined genius for software technique and management coordination, served up in a hands-on style, have multiplied the list of DEVIS clients, coming from the upper reaches of the private sector, from governmental agencies, and from such foreign locales as Africa and Latin America. Clients stay, struck by the subtle technical skills and nicely customized system design, happily bound to the firm, project after project.

**Evelyn Brooks**, a child in Peru, growing up in a family of artists and jewelry designers, began her career as clerk at an airline ticket counter. There must be something in the genes or in the inspiration around the family dinner table, but a train of circumstances drove her where she had vowed she would not go, into the jewelry business! A flair for design and a driving concern for the disadvantaged and oppressed who exist in alarming plenty around the globe have animated her artistic finesse. Combining a sense for the modern in an international style with memories of the ancient Inca arts of Peru have yielded a geometrically simple line with that *je ne sais quoi* of inspiration that gives her jewelry designs entrée with clothing and accessories designers of the first rank, with whom she is often found at the best fashion expositions. The beneficiaries of the lucrative business, as often as not, are such groups as *Fashion Fights Poverty* and *Empowered Women International*.

**Charlie Partridge**, 2010 honoree for Mentorship, is a supplier diversity executive with Pepco Holdings, a mid-Atlantic regional electric utility combine. She has striven tirelessly during her decade-long work with PEPCO to bring small business enterprises up to par, working with numerous business organizations, among these most prominently the MD/DC Minority Supplier Development Council. Her efforts have extended to the design and presentation of small group seminars for entrepreneurs – a tellingly effective way to impart an accurate sense of the factual profile that the successful entrepreneur must present to potential clients.

In a salutary sign of our times a new generation of women are found thrusting novel ideas and energies into the old bureaucracies of many federal agencies. **Ana Harvey**, the new Assistant Administrator of the S.B.A. for Women's Business Ownership is the smart, engaging personality that puts a fresh and persuasive face on the panoply of that agency's programs for instructing and tangibly boosting the lot of entrepreneurs fighting the good fight in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America. **Alejandra Castillo**, a skilled lawyer and a young veteran of Washington's federal labyrinth, has found her niche as second in command at the Minority Business Development Agency, a division of the Department of Commerce. As Deputy Director she has a hand on the throttle for a variety of programs designed, each in its own mode, for encouraging, aiding, and rewarding the business enterprises flourishing in the country's many minority communities.

The program's sponsoring Congressional member, **Rep. Raúl Grijalva** of Arizona, is the lead speaker for the Conference midday session. Rep. Grijalva was an outspoken critic of the recent health care bills, urging a more robust public insurance facility, and has been a clear and incisive voice on questions of immigration, a banner issue for Dialogue on Diversity – and a matter on which the Congressman's own state has come front and center with its recent attempted enforcement law.

"Dialogue on Diversity", notes its President, **Ma. Cristina Caballero**, "continues its celebration of the vitality of the country's small business sector, as these enterprises, a large part of them women-owned, pull their weight while the still tentative motions of the country's economic networks call out for a timely reinvigoration. It is our energies that, with a little luck, will start the forward motion, drawing a dynamic society out of the economic doldrums."

Women entrepreneurs, a key creative dynamic in present economic circumstances, are the focus in the day's lineup of workshops filling the Conference agenda — the big three topic areas: marketing and supplier diversity; wireless telecommunications and other enterprise-relevant developments on the IT front (where privacy interests stand to be undermined by historically subtle and powerful intrusions enabled by the marvels of contemporary technology!); access to capital and focused financial management skills – all these heading the list of essential small/mid-size business topics.

A special feature of this year's conference will be the **Entrepreneurship Fair**, a day-long display of the products and services of a series of successful women-owned enterprises, exhibiting the achievement of entrepreneurs of the Latino, African American, and other ethnic communities.

The Conference brings its focus to bear on marketing for small/mid-sized enterprises in a seminar featuring private sector purchasing executives, along with similar officials from federal agencies (the "OSDBU" offices) who assemble the purchasing entities' supply chains, seeking out small and minority firms, among these many women-owned enterprises, for lucrative slots in the array of suppliers. The techniques and skills for exploiting this valuable marketing realm will be the subject of expert presentations. Later interactive sessions, moreover, will permit small group and individual talks with company purchasing personnel on the lookout for smart and innovative small and mid-size enterprise resources.

Financial institutions and such public agencies as the S.B.A and the Minority Business Development Agency in the Department of Commerce will outline their services to small and mid-sized business entities – from informational help for business planning, supply and resource finding aids, to loan guaranties and government contract awards among the benefits on offer for the alert entrepreneur.

The 2010 Conference is presented with no attendance fee. Door prizes will be given at the conclusion of the program. Registration can be made (before July 23) at the Dialogue's internet site: [www.dialogueondiversity.org](http://www.dialogueondiversity.org) or simply by e-mail to [dialog.div@prodigy.net](mailto:dialog.div@prodigy.net).

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