

## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Centro Latino for Literacy and UCLA Host *Encuentro* Event to Promote Literacy in the Latino Community**

**Los Angeles, CA (February 19, 2008)** - Centro Latino for Literacy today announced the *Encuentro* event on February 29<sup>th</sup> to launch a two-year countywide Spanish literacy campaign. Created in partnership with the UCLA Graduate School of Education, *Encuentro* will bring together education and training experts, UCLA researchers, and newly literate adults to learn about the new literacy campaign and participate in the development of training workshops.

“Through this campaign over the next two years, we envision that every non-literate Latino in Los Angeles can finally have a chance to learn to read and write,” said Executive Director Melanie Stephens, “*Encuentro* is the first step towards educating and empowering the Latino community through basic literacy so they may improve their lives. Literacy is the key to their dreams of learning English, getting better jobs, owning homes and helping their children do well in school.”

Centro Latino invites educators and trainers interested in participating in *Encuentro* and in playing a key role in the development of new teaching methods for the Latino community to attend the inaugural event.

“Centro Latino is at the vanguard of literacy, developing new tools and strategies to reach some of Los Angeles County’s most marginalized residents,” said Concepción Valadez, associate professor at UCLA’s Graduate School of Education. “Poverty and rural isolation prevents 10 to 15 percent of Latino immigrants from attending school as children. By mobilizing and training literate Spanish speakers to help their non-literate family members and friends learn to read and write, this literacy campaign will help some of the 200,000 non-literate Latinos in L.A. County gain basic reading and writing skills vital to every aspect of life in our society.”

Centro Latino will host approximately 100 training sessions through 2010 as part of its countywide Spanish literacy campaign, which seeks to create universal access to literacy and to foster a culture of learning in the Latino community. *Encuentro* will serve as an integral step in shaping these training sessions, in which literate Spanish speakers will be trained to help their non-literate friends and family members.

## **Centro Latino for Literacy and UCLA Host *Encuentro...*** **Page 2**

### **About *Encuentro***

When: February 29, 10am-2pm  
Where: Los Angeles Times Community Room  
202 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, L.A., CA 90012  
Free parking available  
Contact: (213) 483-7753 or [michelle@centrolatinoliteracy.org](mailto:michelle@centrolatinoliteracy.org)

### **About Centro Latino for Literacy**

Founded in 1991 to address the pressing need for basic literacy instruction among Latino immigrants, Centro Latino for Literacy set out to bridge the chasm separating these non-literate immigrants from learning English and other vital skills by teaching them first to read and write in Spanish. Centro Latino for Literacy has taught basic literacy skills to more than 2,000 non-literate Latino youth and adults, and functional skills—such as basic math, grammar, financial literacy, health literacy and computer skills—to an additional 5,000 low-income Latinos.

For more information on Centro Latino for Literacy, call (213) 483-7753 or visit our websites: [www.centrolatinoliteracy.org](http://www.centrolatinoliteracy.org) and [www.leamos.org](http://www.leamos.org).

### **Interview Opportunities**

Four newly literate Latino adults will be available for interviews from 1-2 pm on Friday Feb. 29 at the Encuentro at the Los Angeles Times.

Several Centro Latino students are running in the Los Angeles marathon on Sunday, March 2. They will be available for interviews before or after the event.

Interviews with Centro Latino Executive Director Melanie Stephens and other staff, along with students, can be arranged upon request.

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