



**For Immediate Release**  
May 4, 2007  
Washington, DC

Contact: Amy Hinojosa  
Telephone: 202-833-0060  
ahinojosa@hermana.org

### **MANA Partners on National Literacy Space Project Initiative**

On Sunday, April 29, 2007, a national innovative model for an early reading initiative was unveiled at the Oliver LaFarge Public Library in Santa Fe, New Mexico. MANA, a National Latina Organization, partnered with local affiliate MANA del Norte as well as The College of Santa Fe, the Oliver LaFarge Public Library, First Book, Home Depot, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, SER-Jobs for Progress National, and Southwest Airlines to promote the National Literacy Space Initiative.

The Santa Fe Literacy Space will encourage reading, cultural acceptance, and imaginative play through Native American, Hispanic, and Southwestern folktales. It will serve as a national model for other communities to embrace their rich cultural heritage and share it with younger generations through storytelling and a shared love of books. Home Depot has generously taken the lead on building this outdoor area adjacent to the library for children and adults alike to enjoy.

The grand opening event of the Literacy Space coincided with Día de los Niños, or Children's Day, a traditional Hispanic holiday that takes place in April. Among the activities were three distinct children's reading circles representing the diverse culture and history of New Mexico. Among the display booths, First Book distributed free books and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence distributed education tool kits for families.

"Early reading creates a direct link to lifetime learning. By combining cultural elements with this reading initiative, MANA will help establish a reading network for Hispanic children in the hopes of generating a sustainable interest in education," said Alma Morales Riojas, President and CEO of MANA, A National Latina Organization.

###

***About MANA:** MANA, A National Latina Organization, is a nonprofit advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. With chapters across the country, it is the oldest national Latina membership organization in the United States. MANA, whose mission is to empower Latinas through leadership development, community service, and advocacy, envisions a national community of informed Latina activists working to improve the quality of life for all Hispanics. MANA also has the only national Latina's mentoring program for girls 11 to 17, "HERMANITAS®" which brings over 100 girls each year to a Washington, DC leadership institute that includes a briefing at the White House and a visit to the girls' Congressional representatives.*