



**For Immediate Release
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**MANA, A National Latina Organization, Hosts Annual
Hermanitas® Leadership Institute**

MANA, A National Latina Organization (MANA) will welcome more than 100 young Latinas from across the nation for its annual Hermanitas® Leadership Institute on Thursday, July 20, 2006, at the DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City, in Arlington, Virginia, which is right outside of Washington, DC. The three-day Institute includes cultural activities, interactive workshops and presentations by prominent Latina guest speakers. In addition, the young Latinas will attend a briefing on Capitol Hill and have an opportunity to meet with their Congressional representatives. The Honorable Anna Escobedo Cabral, United States Treasurer, will be the Featured Speaker at the Closing Banquet to be held on Saturday, July 21, 2006, at 8:00 p.m.

“As community leaders MANA members see first-hand the need that our young Latinas have for positive role models and mentors,” said Alma Morales Riojas, President and CEO of MANA. “Our MANA members have seized this opportunity to make a difference, and through our AvanZamos® Ford Fellowship Program, they are becoming mentors and mentor-trainers to the HERMANITAS® (little sisters) in their communities,” she added.

The focus of the HERMANITAS® Leadership Institute program is to raise awareness about life choices, their impact, and how to turn that awareness into action. Six months after the Institute, MANA will conduct a follow-up assessment with each participant to measure the impact the Hermanitas® Leadership Institute made in the lives of young Latinas. In 2003, the Hermanitas® program received the National Latino Children's Institute's La Promesa de Un Futuro Brillante (The Promise of a Bright Future) Award.

HERMANITAS® Program funding is provided by State Farm Insurance Companies, Ford Motor Company Fund, and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. “MANA is grateful for the incredible investment our corporate partners have made in the futures of these young Latinas. Preparing them to face and conquer a tough and competitive environment is not only generous, but wise,” said Alma Morales Riojas.

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MANA, A National Latina Organization, is a nonprofit advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, D. C., with chapters across the country. It is the oldest national Latina membership organization in the United States. The MANA mission is to empower Latinas through leadership development, community service, and advocacy. The MANA vision is a national community of informed Latina activists working to improve the quality of life for all Hispanics.

MANA is unique in that it has the only national Latinas' mentoring program for girls from 11 to 17 years of age, "HERMANITAS®". "HERMANITAS®" annually brings over a hundred young Latinas to Washington, DC for a leadership institute that includes a briefing at the White House and a visit with their Congressional representatives.