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MANA, A National Latina Organization Announces Annual Educational and Training Conference May 22-24, 2008 in Fort Worth, Texas

MANA, A National Latina Organization, with headquarters in Washington, DC, twenty one Chapters nationwide and four affiliates across the nation, will hold it's Annual Educational and Training Conference from May 22-24, 2008, at the Radisson Hotel Fort Worth North-Fossil Creek. Latinas from all over the country will converge for two and a half days of workshops and leadership training. Those in attendance will have the opportunity to listen to dynamic speakers including Dr. Carmen Tafolla, renowned author and Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, author of the New York Times Best Sellers *The Dirty Girls Social Club* and *Playing With Boys*. Invited guests also include The Honorable Anna Escobedo Cabral, United States Treasurer and Ivette Fernandez, Associate Director of the Office of Public Liaison, The White House and author and motivational speaker Juana Bordas.

Pre-conference activities will begin on Sunday May 18th, as MANA hosts the 2008 State Farm Bilingual Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Fellowship Program. On Thursday May 22nd we will host the Community Family Safety Day at the Radisson Hotel Fort Worth North-Fossil Creek, sponsored by State Farm. MANA members and affiliates who complete the State Farm Bilingual CPS Fellowship Program, from May 19th-22nd, will be certified as Child Passenger Safety Technicians. They will check car seats for proper safety procedures and give away a limited number of car seats to low income families as a free public service.

The Conference will begin Thursday evening with a reception "Honoring Latina Public Officials". On Friday and Saturday, there will be workshops with experts on Writing Family Histories, Latina Health, Latinas and Retirement, Entrepreneurship, Chapter Leadership, Financial Literacy, Holistic Health and Advocacy. Throughout the conference, MANA will be showcasing the work of Latina authors and artists at the Mercado, where educational and community information will also be available.

On Friday, May, 23rd, MANA welcomes Dr. Carmen Tafolla, internationally acclaimed writer and educational consultant. She has published five books of poetry, seven television screenplays, one non-fiction volume, and numerous short stories, academic articles, and children's works. She will be presenting a workshop on Writing Family Histories with Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, who has been named a Woman of the Year by *Latina*, one of the 100 most influential Hispanics by *Hispanic Business* magazine and one of the 25 most influential Hispanics by *Time* magazine. Valdes-Rodriguez holds a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University and was a journalist with the *Boston Globe* and *LA Times*. She published her first novel, *The Dirty Girls Social Club* in 2001 and has gone on to publish other works including *Make Him Look Good* in 2007, *Haters* in 2006 and *Playing with Boys* in 2005.

That evening, MANA will host a Red Dress and Boots Reception, Fashion Show and Scholarship Award Presentation. The evening theme aims to shed light on heart health awareness and heart disease prevention. Four scholarships will also be awarded to five local Latina students. These scholarships are made possible by generous support from Ford Motor Company and Milan Voga, as well as Coors Brewing Company.

“2008 will be a special year as we kick off festivities for the 35th Anniversary of MANA. The amazing speakers and guests at this conference embody Latina leadership in their respective educational, artistic, and motivational careers, as well as in the community work they all take part in. Our members from across the nation, as well as members of the greater Fort Worth area will be inspired, motivated and given tools to continue their efforts to contribute to community development for Hispanics,” said MANA CEO and President Alma Morales Riojas.

MANA is pleased to recognize Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., State Farm Insurance Companies, and Southwest Airlines, for their unyielding commitment to Latina empowerment. For more information on the conference, to register or purchase individual event tickets, please visit www.hermana.org or call 202-833-0060.

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***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 mentoring program for girls 11 to 18, known as HERMANITAS®.*