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Esperanza Releases Results of Study to Advocate for HIV/AIDS Awareness

June 15, 2007 – Esperanza, one of the leading faith-based Hispanic organizations in the country, released yesterday the results of its second study of Latino churches and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The research was produced by The University of Notre Dame’s Institute for Latino Studies. The results of the study were presented last night during the National Health Initiatives Dinner to hundreds of Latino clergy and community leaders from around the nation, as part of the events of the 2007 National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast and Conference, taking place June 13-15th in Washington, D.C.

“Answering the Call: How Latino Churches can Respond to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic”, is the name of the research, which studies Latino congregations in Chicago, Illinois. The research was conducted to better understand how Latino churches and clergy might be involved in helping people living with HIV/AIDS and how the congregations and their leaders are responding to the disease and those it affects in their communities.

“Churches serve as an important source of information to their congregations and they can help breakdown the myths and taboos associated with HIV/AIDS,” said Reverend Luis Cortés, Jr., founder and president of Esperanza. “This study goes hand in hand with Esperanza’s “Tú Eres la Respuesta” (You are the Answer) initiative, which seeks to recruit churches around the country to commit to raise awareness and become caring and supportive communities for individuals living with HIV/AIDS.” Resource materials for this initiative include the short film *No te rindas* (*Don’t Give Up*), produced by Esperanza with Marcos Witt and CanZion Group and the *Hay una respuesta* music compilation.

The National Health Initiatives Dinner was hosted by Mujeres de Esperanza (Women of Hope), Esperanza’s national ministry that unites women of all ages across the nation in prayer, affirmation and service. This marks the second national event for the women’s ministry in conjunction with the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast and Conference.

To request a copy of the entire study, contact Marisol Martínez at press@esperanza.us or 215-324-0746, extension 205.

Esperanza is a faith-based non-profit organization committed to raising awareness and identifying resources that strengthen the Hispanic community. Esperanza’s initiatives help develop communities, provide technical assistance to Latino faith and community-based organizations, advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness, and provide workforce development opportunities. For more information on the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast and Conference, Esperanza, and its national programs and resources, go to www.esperanza.us.

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