

**Educational Organization for United Latin Americans (EOFULA)
Spanish Senior Center**

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Contact: Vanessa Bilanceri, 202-244-0121

**EOFULA – Spanish Senior Center Celebrates Its “Abuelitos” and
Announces Plans to Build New Senior Center and Housing Facility in DC**

Washington, DC – Several local business and community leaders were honored Wednesday evening, October 22, 2008 at the Educational Organization for United Latin Americans (EOFULA) 2008 Annual Gala. The gala, held at the residence of the Venezuelan Ambassador, celebrated the 600 seniors served on a yearly basis by EOFULA's Spanish Senior Center at 1842 Calvert St NW.

“EOFULA Spanish Senior Center is home for many of our seniors from Latin America,” said Angel Luis Irene, EOFULA Executive Director. “This evening was a great occasion for them to laugh and smile and make new friends. We are also very pleased to utilize the gala as an important opportunity to let the community know what we do for DC Latino seniors and to honor some very special friends in the community and local business.”

The event was indeed a celebration, featuring a Latin wine tasting and live Latin music from the Joe Falero and the DC Latin Jazz All Stars. The seniors, or abuelitos as they are fondly called at the Center, enjoyed every moment of it, laughing, eating, and dancing with friends and staff from the Center, as well as new friends who came to support the Center.

EOFULA honored several community and business leaders, including, Maria Gomez, President and CEO of Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care; Verizon DC; the United Planning Organization; Jose Nunez, EOFULA Outgoing President of the Board of Directors; and EOFULA Volunteer Robert Linden.

“I am extremely honored to be acknowledged as a strong advocate for seniors by EOFULA,” said Maria Gomez, President & CEO of Mary's Center, and Recipient of the EOFULA Abuelitos' Community Service Award. “My gratitude and the gratitude of my staff at Mary's Center go to them because their good work helps so many wonderful senior citizens in Washington DC. I look forward to additional collaborative efforts and hope that our work will help to break many of the barriers our seniors face.”

More than 150 community members came to recognize the abuelitos and the good work of EOFULA. Corporate event sponsors included: Verizon DC, Silver Companies, AARP DC, James G Davis Construction, Brandywine Realty, Douglas Jemal, Duke Realty, PEPCO and PanAm International Market.

In addition, this year's event received a wide range of support from a group of community leaders; this year's Honorary Host Committee consisted of:

- Dr. Clarence Brown, Director, DC Office on Aging
- The Honorable Josefina G. Carbonell
- Ms. Nelly Carrion, Director, Washington Hispanic

- Rev. Mario Dorsonville, Vice President for Mission, Spanish Catholic Center, Catholic Charities DC
- Dr. Yanira Cruz, President & CEO, National Hispanic Council on Aging
- Dr. Jane Delgado, President & CEO, National Alliance for Hispanic Health
- The Honorable Jim Graham, Ward One Councilmember, District of Columbia Council
- Mr. Edward Kadunc, Director, Pan American Health and Education Foundation
- Dr. Monica M. Klien, Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Georgetown University
- Ms. Mercedes Lemp, Director, DC Office on Latino Affairs
- Mr. L. Carlos Mateos, Owner/Operator, FEC Management, LLC
- Ms. Rebecca Read Medrano and Mr. Hugo Medrano, Co-Founders, GALA Hispanic Theatre
- The Honorable Loretta Sanchez, US Representative (CA)
- Ms. Elena M. Suárez, Chief of the Special Programs, Inter-American Development Bank.

EOFULA - Spanish Senior Center provides a safe, enjoyable and educational space for Hispanic and other seniors to spend each week day. A few hundred local seniors come through the Center's doors each week. Most seniors live below poverty level and have little family support. Over 65% of the seniors live alone. So, they have made EOFULA their family.

"We all love each other at EOFULA," said senior Caridad Sahagun, originally from Cuba. "I suffer when I don't come; all my sickness goes away when I come to EOFULA."

EOFULA was especially proud during the gala to unveil drawings of its "aging in place" housing facility it plans to begin building in the near future. The property is located the Brightwood community in Ward 4 of Northwest Washington, DC. Mayor Adrian Fenty made the formal announcement on October 16, 2008. The new facility at 1330 Missouri Ave NW will feature more than 40 independent living units for seniors and is scheduled to open in 2010.

For nearly 40 years, the Educational Organization for United Latin Americans (EOFULA) has effectively served the Latino community in Washington, DC, specializing in creating and implementing comprehensive programs to address the unique needs of the Latino senior population. EOFULA - Spanish Senior Center programming includes medical case management, wellness services, group meals, and social services, among others.

For more information on EOFULA - Spanish Senior Center, visit www.eofula.org or call 202-483-5800.

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