

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Community Celebration of Literacy

Albuquerque, NM – Just twelve years ago, Marten Griego was functionally illiterate, depressed, and a substance abuser. He was one of the estimated 46% of adults in New Mexico who can't read or write above the 6th grade level. These days, Albuquerque-based Griego, is an award-winning author of a memoir (*Leaving the House of Tears*) and likes to spend his days golfing and his evenings on the dance floor. Griego's life changed when he walked through the door at ReadWest, Inc, an adult literacy program in Rio Rancho, NM.

“Today my mission is quite clear: to promote literacy and to recognize and thank those who have made literacy organizations possible,” says Griego. “What an honor and a privilege to say to the world, ‘I’m applying my gift of literacy’,” says Griego, flashing his ready smile.

Griego will be among a diverse group of local celebrities who will commemorate Literacy Day in New Mexico 2010 at “A Celebration of Literacy” event in Albuquerque. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization established September 8 as Literacy Day in 1965 to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities, and societies around the world. This event, which marks the 45th annual celebration of International Literacy Day held in conjunction with local and statewide celebrations worldwide, kicks off on September 8 with a gubernatorial proclamation reading at 11:00 AM followed by a fast-paced program that include readings and comments by local notables. The event ends at 1:00 PM. The venue is the Outpost Performance Center at 210 Yale Street, SE. The event is free to the public. Guests are encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch and may come for part or all of the celebration. The press is strongly encouraged to attend and interviews are most welcome.

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Among the ten Albuquerque celebrities who plan to participate are Senator Dede Feldman (District 13); Albuquerque's Mayor Richard J. Berry and First Lady, Maria Berry; and Harlan McKosato, host and producer of the nationally syndicated radio show Native America Calling. Each participant will read a passage from a favorite book and then share a few remarks on how the book influenced them. And adult literacy advocate Marten Griego will be among those presenting.

The New Mexico Coalition for Literacy (800.233.7587) is co-hosting Literacy Day in New Mexico along with two Albuquerque area adult literacy programs: ReadWest, Inc. in Rio Rancho (505.892.1131) and Reading Works, Inc. in Albuquerque (505.321.9620). Both programs provide one-to-one, confidential, free adult literacy tutoring to adults. The event is sponsored, in part, by a grant from the Verizon Foundation and private contributions.

The NMCL, located in Santa Fe, is a capacity building organization that provides funding, training, technical assistance, professional development to adult literacy programs around the state. Contact the NMCL for referrals to local programs that offer free, private, one-to-one tutoring or to engage Marten Griego to make a presentation on adult literacy. The NMCL opens its doors to the public for 1-hour informational tours at noon on the first Wednesday of each month. Call to reserve seating or get details: 1-800-233-7587. Visit the NMCL website at www.nmcl.org or e-mail the NMCL at info@nmcl.org.

Literacy programs supported by the NMCL have served 4,090 individuals during program year 2009-2010 and 77,452 adults since its founding in 1987. There are fourteen counties in New Mexico that currently have no adult literacy programs and almost a million adults could benefit from literacy services.

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