



## **NEW MEXICO COALITION FOR LITERACY**

3209 MERCANTILE COURT STE. B ♦ SANTA FE, NM 87507 ♦ 1-800-233-7587 ♦ FAX: 505-982-4095

Contact: Heather Heunermund, Executive Director  
Tel. 505-982-3997  
Email: info@nmcl.org

*For Immediate Release*  
September 2, 2011

### **GOVERNOR SUSANA MARTINEZ DECLARES LITERACY DAY THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

**Santa Fe** – Governor Susana Martinez has declared Literacy Day throughout the State of New Mexico on September 8, 2011 in conjunction with the 45<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of International Literacy Day nation and worldwide. Local adult literacy programs throughout New Mexico will declare Literacy Day in their local communities with mayoral proclamations and citywide celebrations.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) leads the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) under the slogan, “Literacy as Freedom.” Launched at UN headquarters in 2003, the UNLD aims to increase literacy levels to empower all people worldwide. UNESCO established September 8 as International Literacy Day in 1965 to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities, and societies around the world. Seven hundred ninety six million adults worldwide reported not being able to read and write and two-thirds of them were women, according to UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics (2008).

In New Mexico, it is estimated that seven hundred six thousand six hundred twenty-seven adults could benefit from literacy services - sixteen percent are estimated to be illiterate and thirty percent are estimated as functionally illiterate. With one of the highest poverty rates in the nation, New Mexico also has one of the highest percentages of adults who are illiterate and functionally illiterate.

-CONTINUED-

Since 1987, the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy (NMCL) has provided funding, training, technical assistance to adult literacy programs throughout the State. The NMCL was established under the Carruthers administration by First Lady, Kathy Carruthers, and has remained a priority since its founding. Begun as an effort to gain support through the State Legislature to provide modest operating expenses for community-based adult literacy programs, the NMCL has grown in both stature and capacity to support these programs, all while maintaining a small and efficient staff of three.

The NMCL is funded by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs/State Library through the New Mexico State Legislature and also relies on fundraisers and community support to increase the number of students served.

For more information about adult literacy, to volunteer as a tutor, schedule an interview, or refer a potential student, call the NMCL's literacy hotline at 1-800-233-7587 or email [info@nmcl.org](mailto:info@nmcl.org). You may also visit the NMCL's website at [www.nmcl.org](http://www.nmcl.org).

###