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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DCFS-SUPPORTED HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM WINS TWO NATIONAL AWARDS

La Casa Norte garners Maxwell Award of Excellence for supportive housing and Award for Architectural Excellence in Community Design

CHICAGO – An innovative, community-based homelessness prevention program, supported by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, merited two national awards in February:

The Fannie Mae Foundation, in collaboration with the Partnership to End Long Term Homelessness, awarded La Casa Norte the Seventeenth Maxwell Award of Excellence. The award included a grant of \$75,000 in recognition of La Casa Norte's Solid Ground Supportive Housing Program in Humboldt Park, which provides 16 transitional housing units for youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program won first place in the national competition, in the youth housing category.

The program also received the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award for Architectural Excellence in Community Design, as part of the 14th Annual Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards. Landon Bone Baker Architects was recognized for their design, a conversion of an unused masonry building into a space that demonstrates a commitment both to the youth it serves and to environmental sustainability.

"We saw the enormous potential of La Casa Norte from the beginning," said DCFS Director Erwin McEwen. "They deserve our deepest thanks for the commitment and compassion they have brought to the lives of DCFS clients and their communities."

DCFS has funded La Casa Norte's housing advocacy program since 2002. The program serves families with children at risk of entering foster care, or who cannot return home from foster care due to inadequate housing, and youth under 21 who are aging out, or have aged out, of foster care.

"We are so proud and honored to receive these awards from Fannie Mae and the Richard Driehaus Foundation," said La Casa Norte Executive Director Sol A. Flores. "It's an amazing privilege to

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be able to serve our community – meeting the needs and making a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable yet promising populations. We are very grateful to our many supporters, including the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for their commitment to youth and families.”

For further information on these two awards and La Casa Norte, use these links:

http://www.endlongtermhomelessness.org/2007_maxwell_awards/2007_maxwell_awards_finalists.aspx

<http://www.lisc-cnda.org/display.aspx?pointer=3773>

www.lacasanorte.org

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