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Dear Friends,

We hope that each of you is enjoying a relaxing holiday. With 2010 fast approaching, we wanted to take a moment to review how far the Esperanza Education Fund has come in 2009, and to let you know where we are headed in 2010. We hope you will keep us—and our progress—in mind if you are considering making any charitable gifts before the end of the year.

2009 was just the beginning for the Esperanza Education Fund.

The Esperanza Education Fund, Inc., was founded less than a year ago on January 8, 2009, when Alice, Alvaro, and Andy signed our Articles of Incorporation. With the help of our pro bono attorneys at Skadden, Arps, Meagher, Slate & Flom, we obtained tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) public charity shortly thereafter.

Our mission in starting the Esperanza Education Fund was simple: to help local immigrant students go to college—and succeed once they get there.

The immigrant population in the District of Columbia metropolitan area has quadrupled since 1980 but continues to suffer a critical education deficit. Immigrants in the capital region are three times more likely to lack a high school diploma than their native-born peers, and 50 percent more likely to have never gone to college. This education deficit translates into serious economic disadvantage: immigrant families are nearly twice as likely to be poor as native-born families.

Our goal is to help close that gap, one student at a time—and to do so by harnessing the energy and initiative of the immigrant community itself.

Our first year surpassed all expectations.

We are the only scholarship that serves all immigrant students in the capital region regardless of ethnicity, national origin, or immigration status. Because we satisfy an unmet need, we have been able to form a strong network of support in an incredibly short period of time. Within six months of our founding, we leveraged our network of supporters to raise and award \$50,000 in scholarships.

In March, we celebrated our launch with the support of twelve community organizations representing immigrants from all over the world—a diverse group that included the Hispanic Bar Association, Asian-American LEAD, Ivorian Hope, the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans, and the Southeast Asian Resource Action Center. The launch party celebrated the diversity of our immigrant community with African poetry, Mongolian folk dance, and the music of a ten-piece salsa band.



Our initial goal was to award \$20,000 in scholarships our first year. But thanks to our successful launch, and generous gifts from Paul and Daisy Soros, our Board of Advisors, and supporters like you, **we were able to award more than twice our initial goal.** This means we were able to provide financial assistance to twice as many students as initially expected.

Our proudest achievement, however, is our inaugural class of Esperanza Scholars. Selected from 250 applicants and 30 interviewees, our six Esperanza Scholars embody the promise, resilience, and diversity of our immigrant community. They include:

A St. Lucian immigrant who was abandoned by his parents at a young age, rose to become valedictorian and captain of the soccer team of his inner-city Baltimore high school, and is now studying mechanical engineering at Morgan State University;

A published poet and aspiring civil rights activist from Guatemala who founded a civil engagement program for local youth, became vice-president of his high school class, and is now majoring in sociology at the University of the District of Columbia;

A child of Vietnamese farmers who earned perfect scores on the SAT and International Baccalaureate exams in math, worked as a cashier at Popeye's Chicken in high school, and is now studying aerospace engineering at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville;

A budding entrepreneur who left high school in Bolivia just months shy of graduation to financially support his injured father, worked two jobs while attending an alternative high school in Virginia, rose from dishwasher to manager of a local restaurant, and is now studying information technology at Northern Virginia Community College;

An Indian American student who was raised by a single mother, speaks five languages, published scientific research in medical journals while still in high school, and is currently enrolled in an eight-year combined bachelor's and medical degree program at Virginia Commonwealth University; and

An aspiring community health advocate who raised her younger siblings in El Salvador while her parents worked to bring her to the United States, overcame a personal struggle with bulimia, and is now studying to become a nutritionist at Montgomery College.



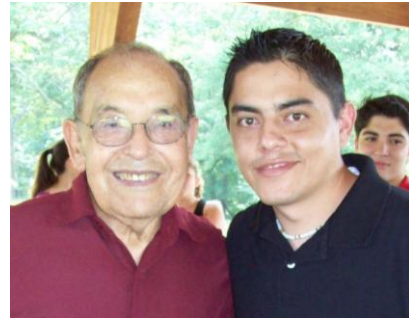
Front row: Our 2009 Esperanza Scholars

In addition to receiving substantial financial assistance to attend the public college of his or her choice, each of our six Esperanza Scholars was matched with a mentor who shares his or her professional or academic interests. Esperanza mentors have helped our scholars with everything from course selection to editing papers for college.

Our next year will be even bigger and better.

We have three main goals for 2010.

First, we aim to **strengthen our mentorship support for our scholars.** With the help of a generous grant from the Inter-American Development Bank Solidarity Program, we intend to provide more opportunities for our scholars to develop meaningful and productive relationships with their mentors and each other. We hope that, by closely mentoring each of our scholars, we will ensure that the same disadvantages that could have kept them from attending college will not keep them from succeeding there.



Second, we seek to **expand our scholarship to the neediest students.** There are precious few scholarships dedicated to immigrant students in the capital region, and fewer still open to GED recipients. GED students tend to be more economically disadvantaged and less familiar with the American education system than traditional high school students, making it even more difficult for them to access higher education. As we head into 2010, the Esperanza Fund has already secured \$20,000 in initial funding from the District of Columbia Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs to help launch a new scholarship program for GED recipients. We hope to build on this initial grant to help as many GED students as possible.



Third, we aim to **double our financial assistance to the capital region's immigrant students.** In our first year, we established a name for the Esperanza Education Fund in our community and awarded more than twice the financial assistance we initially anticipated. We aim to redouble the financial assistance we provide in 2010. By expanding our Board of Advisors, partnering with local businesses, and widening our network of supporters, we believe we can award a total of \$100,000 in scholarships in spring 2010. With about six months left until scholarships are awarded, we are nearly halfway there. With the continued generous support of people like you, we believe we can meet or surpass our goal for 2010.

How You Can Help

Because we are an all-volunteer organization with no overhead, nearly every dollar you give goes directly to new scholarships. We are deeply grateful for every single contribution we receive. Any gift, big or small, helps us to provide scholarships for students who need it most. We hope you will consider making a generous year-end tax-deductible contribution by visiting www.esperanzafund.org/support, or mailing a check to:

The Esperanza Education Fund, Inc.
P.O. Box 27507
Washington, DC 20038

In addition to helping us fund our work, there are several ways to become more involved.

Join our Board of Advisors.

Our chief fundraising arm is the Board of Advisors, composed of leaders in the capital area whose role in the organization is to raise money for new scholarships. Our current Board includes prominent business leaders, attorneys, and community advocates. They have organized private fundraisers, connected us with new donors, and quite simply have been very generous with their own resources.



Members of our Board of Advisors agree to raise or contribute \$2,500 annually. Members who raise \$5,000 or \$10,000 have the opportunity to name a scholarship, which will be matched with a scholar selected by the Scholarship Committee. Members of the Board of Advisors have no obligations beyond fundraising, are invited to attend all scholarship events at no personal expense, and are prominently featured in our literature.

If you are interested in joining the Board of Advisors, please contact Alvaro Bedoya at alvaro@esperanzafund.org.

Spread the word about Esperanza.

In 2009, we held two major fundraisers: a launch party featuring food, music, poetry, and dance from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and a gala benefit concert with renowned Korean-American pianist Elizabeth Joy Roe at the Carnegie Institution of Washington.



We hope that these will be the first of many events that both raise critical funds for new scholarships, and showcase the rich diversity and talent in our immigrant community. If you know any leading immigrant artists, authors, or musicians who may be interested in supporting our cause, please contact Alex Lin at alexander.lin@esperanzafund.org.

Through our events, networks, and outreach, the Esperanza Education Fund gained wide attention from local and national media, including a profile by syndicated journalist Marisa Trevino, a feature article in *Washington Hispanic*, and radio interviews on Pacifica Radio (WPFW 89.3FM) and La Kaliente (WKDL 1460AM). If you know any journalists who may be interested in our story, please contact Cheryl Aguilar at cheryl.aguilar@esperanzafund.org.

Join the Esperanza Education Fund.

Our organization is composed of diverse and accomplished individuals from throughout the capital region—from filmmakers to economists, consultants to designers. You, too, can help us achieve our goal of expanding educational opportunities for local immigrant students.



Our volunteers are divided into three focus areas: Development, Scholarship, and Mentorship. Our Development Committee plans events to promote awareness of our work and to raise funds for our scholarships. In the last six months alone, our Development Committee fielded a team for a 10K run, organized happy hours, and hosted a gala benefit concert at the Carnegie Institution. Our Scholarship Committee is charged with reaching out to local high schools and youth organizations to disseminate information about our scholarships, reviewing applications, interviewing applicants, and selecting our scholars. Finally, the members of our Mentorship Committee advise and support our scholars throughout their college careers. To become involved or to find out more, please contact Alice Wang at alice@esperanzafund.org.

In sum, the Esperanza Education Fund has had a very productive inaugural year. Thanks in large part to your generous support, we have surpassed our initial expectations and are well on our way to meeting our goals for 2010. Your support of our work has provided many immigrant students in the capital region with hope—“esperanza”—for a brighter future.

On behalf of the Esperanza team, we extend to you warm wishes for the new year.

Alvaro Bedoya
Chair, Board of Advisors

Alice Wang
Chair, Board of Directors