

**NEWS RELEASE /  
MEDIA ADVISORY**

**El Programa Hispano Dedicates New Building**

*Catholic Charities' largest social service program exponentially increases capacity to accommodate needs of area's low-income Latinos*

*Gresham, Ore.* – **September 18, 2008** – El Programa Hispano, the largest social service program operated by Catholic Charities in Oregon, will dedicate its new central service building, located at 138 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Ste. 140, in Gresham, on Friday, September 19, 2008 at 4 p.m. Archbishop John Vlazny, Archdiocese of Portland, will offer remarks and a blessing at the event, and volunteers will also be honored.

Since its founding in 1982, El Programa Hispano has been supporting low-income Latinos from throughout the Greater Portland area with services that include family counseling and outreach, mental health and addiction, domestic violence and sexual assault, school-based programs, gang prevention, and childhood development services. Operating from its original 110 square foot Portland office, the program served 150 families from throughout the Greater Portland metropolitan area in its first year. Today El Programa Hispano serves more than 13,000 individuals annually. The new 8,422 square foot location in Gresham, which opened in April 2008, is expected to help the program accommodate the growing needs of the area's low-income Latino population for at least the next several years.

"Low-income Latinos have for years been a silent minority in our community," said Gloria Wiggins, Latino services division manager for Catholic Charities. "This population is recognizing that El Programa Hispano is a place where they can find the confidential help they need. Our new Gresham office gives us the capacity to effectively double the help, and hope, that we provide."

“El Programa Hispano improves the lives of our Latino neighbors,” said Dennis Keenan, executive director of Catholic Charities. “In spite of the societal obstacles they face, Latinos are like every other member of our community in that they want to build better lives for themselves and their families, and they want to contribute to our community. El Programa Hispano helps Latinos acquire the skills and perspectives needed to make these positive transitions.”

### **About El Programa Hispano**

As the largest social service program operated by Catholic Charities in Oregon, El Programa Hispano supports more than 13,000 low-income Latinos annually with services geared toward increasing self-sufficiency, achieving empowerment for a better quality of life, and gaining a mutual understanding and respect among cultures. For more information call (503) 236-9670 in Portland, (503) 669-8350 in Gresham, or go to

[http://www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org/services\\_latino\\_services.asp](http://www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org/services_latino_services.asp).

### ***About Catholic Charities***

Since 1933, Catholic Charities in Oregon has been bringing hope, resources and advocacy to the poorest and most vulnerable throughout the state, regardless of faith, race, marital status or condition in life. The organization serves as the professional social service arm of the Archdiocese of Portland, yet is funded completely through grants and donations. Headquartered in Portland at 231 SE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the organization will move into its new Clark Family Center upon completion in Spring 2010. For more information call (503) 231-4866, or go to [www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org).

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**What:** Building dedication for the central service location of El Programa Hispano, the largest program operated by Catholic Charities.

**Where:** 138 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 140, Gresham, Ore., 97030

**When:** September 19, 2008  
4 p.m.

**Why:** The social service needs of low-income Latinos in the Greater Portland area are greater than ever.

**Interview:** Dennis Keenan, executive director of Catholic Charities, is available for an interview.

Gloria Wiggins, Latino services division manager for Catholic Charities, is available for an interview.

**Photos:** Archbishop John Vlazny, Archdiocese of Portland, will make remarks at the event and offer a blessing.

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