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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Outstanding Hispanic Student Debate Winners Announced at Expo 2005**

*A shift of perception is taking place...NHI students provide a new image for Latino youth*

AUSTIN, TX, November 10, 2005 – A non-profit organization focused on developing the next generation of Hispanic leaders celebrated the success of awarding students with oratory awards as a result of Expo 2005, a national debate contest held at the University of Texas Nov. 4-5. The National Hispanic Institute honored high school sophomores such as Tim Tamez from Austin, TX and Stephanie Perez from Chicago, IL on Saturday night among more than sixteen other debate winners during the awards ceremony held in downtown Austin.

“NHI is actively cultivating the growth of future Hispanic leaders from among the crème of the crop students nationwide. Expo 2005 engaged these students in a dialogue that challenges both broad societal assumptions, as well as their own expectations for themselves as Latinos,” said Ernesto Nieto, founder of NHI, adding, “The Expo debates introduced these students to new ways of thinking about the future for themselves and their communities in ways that perhaps no one previously had talked with them about.”

Expo 2005 featured a series of debates geared toward growing the leadership skills of the 200 Hispanic high school sophomores congregating at the University of Texas Law School in Austin this last November 4 and 5. Some winners included Kristen Nimoh, from Cherry Hill, MA; Israel Fornelli and Stephen Lopez, from El Paso, TX; Jose Hernandez from Pharr, TX; and Tim Tamez and Stephanie Perez previously mentioned.

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The debates presented the opportunity for intellectual discourse between Latino youth in regards to their dreams for the future. In addition, part of the agenda for the debates centered on whether accelerated high school programs promote the development of Latino youth, or whether these academic programs merely prepare the students with basic skills to enter the workforce. At Expo 2005, NHI shared with the community at large its mission, and distinguished itself from other non-profit and private educational organizations.

"The National Hispanic Institute is an organization that is transformational to a young person's life because the Institute's concepts and methods are compelling, attractive, and strikingly different from anything else they have been exposed to, said Misty MJ Tavaréz, an NHI alumna. Tavaréz, now Regional Director for West Texas at NHI added, "As a sixteen year old, I began thinking about the roles I would play throughout my life as a leader in the Latino community and what that would require. It was at an NHI program that I recognized the need to remain involved in a leadership capacity, and to continue to be engaged in the West Texas region where I grew up."

For more information to inquire about NHI programs, contact NHI at 512-357-6137 for a complete list of winners along with their respective categories.

**ABOUT NHI:** The National Hispanic Institute (NHI) is a non-profit organization with a 26-year history of positively affecting the lives of Hispanic youth. With a team of staff based in Maxwell, Texas, along with the support of thousands of volunteers, NHI is an organization that values the talent of Latino youth, and the vast potential they represent for the future of the Latino community in the US and worldwide. NHI provides private community settings through which young Hispanic youth may become intellectually, culturally, and socially engaged today in determining roles they wish to play in shaping tomorrow's world. <http://www.nhi-net.org>

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