

*For Immediate Release*

June 5, 2008

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**20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING TO CELEBRATE & ENCOURAGE LITERACY IN NEW  
MEXICO**

On Friday, June 20 from 8:30 am—3:30 pm, the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy (NMCL) will celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, uniting literacy supporters from around the state. The NMCL has been providing funding, training, technical assistance, and access to an extensive lending library to volunteer adult literacy programs throughout the state for 21 years. The NMCL was established under the Carruthers administration by First Lady, Kathy Carruthers. Started as an effort to gain state support through the legislature to provide modest operating expenses for volunteer adult and family literacy programs, the NMCL has grown both in stature and capacity of support for programs, all while maintaining a small staff of three. They currently receive valuable assistance for special projects through the support of AmeriCorps/Volunteers In Service To America (\*VISTA).

The Annual Meeting kicks off with a Welcoming Reception on Thursday, June 19 from 6—9 pm with the music of Ken Valdez and his band and will be at the Best Western Conference Center in Socorro. The NMCL's Annual Meeting will take place the following day and will include workshops in the morning and afternoon for students, volunteer tutors, administrators, boards, and literacy supporters. World-renowned International Consultant in Adult Education, Dr. Thomas Sticht, will be keynote speaker and featured workshop presenter. Former Senator and Literacy Luminary, Don Kidd, will be luncheon speaker; in winter of 2007, Senator Kidd established the Don and Sarrah Kidd Endowed Chair in Literacy in the College of Education at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, setting an important precedent for literacy state and nation-wide. ProLiteracy Southwest Regional Representative, Kathy St. John, will be a special workshop presenter as well. ProLiteracy America supports the national operations of ProLiteracy Worldwide, an International literacy initiative. The NMCL provides literacy

programs with ProLiteracy certified tutor trainings and supports local literacy programs in receiving their national accreditation as the statewide affiliate.

During the Annual Meeting, the NMCL recognizes and rewards those most exemplary pillars of literacy, as well as the state's most exceptional student, from the 21+ programs they support throughout the entire state. This year, the list of recipients includes: **Student of the Year: Jamrat "Nit" Gober, Read "Write" Adult Literacy Program, Moriarty**; **Volunteer Tutor of the Year: Kay Jercinovic, Read "Write" Adult Literacy Program, Moriarty**; **Board Member of the Year: Stanley Nelson, Roswell Literacy Council**; **Exceptional Literacy Program: Literacy Center @ UNM – Taos**; **Trainer of the Year: Cathryn Varney, NMCL, Santa Fe & ReadWest, Rio Rancho**; **President's Award: former NMCL E.D. Rena Paradis, Santa Fe**; **Distinguished Service: Senator Don Kidd, Carlsbad**; **Partnership Award: KOAT-TV, Channel 7**; **Guardian of Literacy: Alma Green, Socorro**; and **Outgoing President: Bruce Donisthorpe, Albuquerque**.

Certificates of appreciation will be awarded to: First Lady Barbara Richardson; Senator Dede Feldman, Albuquerque; Senator John C. Ryan, Albuquerque; Rep. Don L. Tripp, Socorro; Rep. Peter Wirth, Santa Fe; Congresswoman Heather Wilson, Albuquerque; Sandia Labs & Lockheed Martin; and Michelle Griffith, Corporation for National and Community Service (\*VISTA), Santa Fe.

Both the NMCL and the literacy programs it supports also rely on fundraisers and community support to help programs increase the numbers of students they can serve. With one of the highest poverty rates in the nation, New Mexico also has one the highest percentages of adults who are functionally illiterate. It is estimated that 2 in 4 adults in New Mexico are functionally illiterate. Between 291,626—729,065 adult New Mexicans could benefit from literacy services. Right now, New Mexico is meeting only about between 2—18% of the total need.

If you would like more information about literacy, to schedule an interview, volunteer, donate, or if you know someone who would like to learn to read and write or speak English, please call the NMCL at 1-800-233-7587, write to [info@nmcl.org](mailto:info@nmcl.org), or go to [www.nmcl.org](http://www.nmcl.org).

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