

## *For Immediate Release*

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### **21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATES & ENCOURAGES ADULT LITERACY IN NM**

In celebration of its 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting, the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy (NMCL) invites members of TV, print, and radio to attend a press conference on Thursday, June 18, 2009 from 5—6 pm at the Nativo Lodge's Sabina meeting room in Albuquerque to interview the NMCL's keynote speaker, Nancy Pearl; adult literacy students; and award recipients from local communities in New Mexico.

The Annual Meeting kicks off with a Board Welcoming Reception on Thursday, June 18 from 6—9 pm at the Nativo Lodge in Albuquerque with the music of Patti Littlefield and Woof! The NMCL's Annual Meeting will take place the following day at the Nativo on June 19 from 8 am—4 pm and includes workshops in the morning and afternoon for students, volunteer tutors, administrators, boards, literacy supporters, and members of the public. This year is particularly special, as the NMCL's keynote speaker and featured workshop presenter will be famed librarian extraordinaire and author, Nancy Pearl, regular commentator on NPR's Morning Edition and model for the Librarian Action Figure. The NMCL strongly encourages members of the library community to attend, as well. On-site registration is allowed and the public is welcome. Details are on the NMCL's website by downloading the registration brochure at [www.nmcl.org](http://www.nmcl.org).

During its Annual Meeting, the NMCL recognizes and rewards the year's most exemplary pillars of literacy, as well as the state's most exceptional student from the 23+ programs it supports throughout the New Mexico. The list of recipients includes: Student of the Year: Daniel I. Martinez, Literacy Volunteers of Dona Ana, Las Cruces; Volunteer Tutor of the Year: Bob Sweeney, Literacy Volunteers of Santa Fe; Board Member of the Year: Tina Cates-Ortega, Read "Write" Adult Literacy Program, Moriarty; Exceptional Literacy Program: Tepeyac Consortium's Sage Lifelong Learning Center, Yah-Ta-Hey; Trainer of the Year: Deanne Howland, Albuquerque; President's Award: Ernest Padilla, Padilla Law Firm, P.A., Santa Fe; Distinguished Service Award: Representatives Brian Egolf, Santa Fe and Kathy McCoy, Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Santa Fe; Partnership Award: Sulica Fund; and Outgoing President: Dr. A. Elizabeth Gordon, Albuquerque. Certificates of appreciation will be awarded to: First Lady Barbara Richardson; Joe Monahan, Monahan Marketing, Albuquerque; Sherman McCorkle, President and CEO - Technology Ventures Corporation of Lockheed Martin, Albuquerque; and Brenda Gray, Literacy Consultant, Albuquerque.

Since 1987, the NMCL has been providing funding; access to an extensive, special lending library; training; and technical assistance to adult literacy programs throughout the state. The NMCL was established under the Carruthers administration by First Lady, Kathy Carruthers, and has remained a First Lady's initiative since its founding. Begun as an effort to gain State support through the legislature to provide modest operating expenses for volunteer and community-based adult literacy programs, the NMCL has grown both in stature and capacity in support of these programs, all while maintaining a small and efficient staff of three.

Though the NMCL is proudly supported by the Department of Cultural Affairs/State Library through the New Mexico State Legislature, both the NMCL and its coalition programs also rely on fundraisers and community support to help its literacy programs increase the number 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 almost half of all 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% of the total need.

If you would like more information about adult literacy, or if you would like 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 visit our website at [www.nmcl.org](http://www.nmcl.org).

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