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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Second Annual Portraits of Opportunity Photography Exhibition and Fundraiser Oct. 28 *Southwest Human Development and Prominent Valley Photographers Use Images to Bring Child Development Issues to the Foreground*

PHOENIX (Sept. 23, 2010) – On Thursday, Oct. 28, Southwest Human Development aims to prove that, as American photographer W. Eugene Smith observed, “Photography is a small voice at best, but sometimes one photograph, or a group of them, can lure our sense of awareness.”

For the second year, the non-profit child development agency will showcase a collection of photographs captured by prominent local photographers at its Portraits of Opportunity exhibition and benefit. The photographs visually tell the story of eight families that have found assistance and success – through Southwest Human Development – in facing challenges associated with disabilities, drug abuse, trauma, mental health issues and literacy.

“Portraits of Opportunity shares a small sampling of the positive changes our comprehensive programs for children ages birth to five create in the lives of real Valley children and families,” said Ginger Ward, CEO of Southwest Human Development. “Given that many families turn to us for more than one service, these photographs communicate what is often too complex to explain in words. We are fortunate to have the participation of some of the most talented Valley photographers and are grateful that they have joined us in bringing awareness to the importance of early childhood development.”

Southwest Human Development has commissioned photographers Wayne Rainey, Rick Gayle, Paul Markow, Karen Shell, Brandon Sullivan, David Schmidt, Ellen Barnes and Linda Enger to apply their individual styles while approaching sensitive issues, such as disabilities and mental health, in a way that evokes respect and admiration for each family.

The artists’ interpretations will be unveiled during a reception at Steele Indian School Park’s Memorial Hall on Thursday, Oct. 28, from 6 to 9 p.m. Art enthusiasts and those interested in supporting children’s issues will have the opportunity to view and purchase the poignant images, with all proceeds benefitting the more than 135,000 Arizona children and families that Southwest Human Development serves each year.

Tickets for Portraits of Opportunity are \$75 and can be purchased by visiting www.swhd.org/events or calling 602-224-1757.

About Southwest Human Development

Founded in 1981 as a non-profit organization, Southwest Human Development provides comprehensive services for young children and their families in several areas: disabilities, early literacy, child health and welfare, Head Start and professional training. Now serving 135,000 children and families each year, Southwest Human Development is the state’s largest community-based organization of its type. In 2007, Southwest Human Development became the official Central and Northern Arizona affiliate of Easter Seals. Easter Seals Southwest Human Development provides services to children and adults with disabilities and other special needs, and support to their families. Most recently, CEO Ginger Ward was named one of the Valley’s top 25 CEOs for 2010 by the *Phoenix Business Journal*. For more information on Southwest Human Development’s many services or donation and volunteer opportunities, visit www.swhd.org.

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