



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT WELCOMES FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**PHOENIX (May 31, 2011)** – Four new community leaders from the Valley have been elected to the Southwest Human Development Board of Directors. The new members, Iris Ortega, Karen Ramos, Rosario Rodriguez and Tom Simplot, bring a wealth expertise in organizational development and leadership to support Southwest Human Development in serving more than 135,000 local families and children with comprehensive and innovative early childhood services.

“The diverse set of ideas and knowledge the new board members bring to Southwest Human Development are essential to our goal of being a high-performing, inclusive organization,” said Ginger Ward, Founder and CEO. “I look forward to Iris, Karen, Rosario and Tom contributing to the continued success of our organization.”

The Southwest Human Development Board of Directors is a select group of individuals, from a variety of backgrounds, responsible for setting policy and overseeing the organization's general wellbeing.

The four newly elected board members include:

**Iris Ortega, Head Start Policy Council** – Ortega has been involved with Southwest Human Development's Early Head Start program since 2009, when her son enrolled in the program. Since that time, Ortega has been active with the organization in a leadership role and continues to support the program as a member of the Head Start Policy Council.

**Karen Ramos, CVS Caremark** – As a Senior Manager of Community Relations for CVS Caremark, Ramos is responsible for directing and implementing community relations programs for the CVS/pharmacy WEST Division through charitable contributions, community affairs and volunteer activities in 15 states. Ramos is also the liaison for the CVS/pharmacy employee resource groups, supporting the diverse communities where CVS/pharmacy stores operate. Prior to moving to Arizona, Ramos was located in Chicago where she served for two years as a member of the Illinois Economic Development Board, and at the University of Illinois at Chicago on both the board for the Community Media Workshop and the Newman Center. In Arizona, Ramos served on the Arizona Retailers Board of Directors. Prior to being elected as a board member for Southwest Human Development, Ramos was Walk Chair for the Easter Seals Southwest Human Development Walk With Me event in 2009 and 2010.

**Rosario Rodriguez, Head Start Policy Council** – Rodriguez is the alternative representative for the Head Start Policy Council. Rodriguez plays an instrumental role assisting the free, comprehensive child development program serving low-income children, age birth through four, their families and expectant mothers.

**Tom Simplot, Arizona Multihousing Association (AMA)** – A longtime Phoenix resident, Simplot has served the Phoenix City Council since 2003. In January 2009, he was elected, unanimously, by his fellow council members to serve as Vice Mayor. In representing District 4 of Phoenix as a Councilman, Simplot focuses on reducing crime, supporting small business and strengthening neighborhood culture. In addition to his post on the Phoenix City Council, Simplot is the President and CEO of the Arizona Multihousing Association where he shares his knowledge as an attorney and licensed realtor. Active in the community, Simplot has served as the President of the Maricopa County Board of Health and the Maricopa County Industrial Development Authority. In addition, he

served as Chair of the Phoenix Historic Preservation Commission, Vice-Chair of the Phoenix Encanto Village Planning Committee and a member of the Phoenix Housing Commission, among other boards and commissions. Currently, Simplot serves as chairman of the METRO Board of Directors and on the board of a community-based social service agency, Valle del Sol. He also formerly served as one of three municipal members of the Federal Communications Commission's Intergovernmental Advisory Committee. Presently, Simplot is the Chairman of the City Council's Housing & Neighborhoods Subcommittee and a member of two subcommittees: Transportation, Infrastructure & Sustainability; and Seniors, Families & Parks.

### **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 Easter Seals affiliate of central and northern Arizona. Easter Seals Southwest Human Development provides services to children with disabilities and other special needs, and support to their families. In addition, CEO Ginger Ward was recently named one of the Valley's top 25 CEOs for 2010 by the Phoenix Business Journal. For more information on the non-profit's many services or donation and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.swhd.org](http://www.swhd.org).

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