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Juan Sánchez (100 . Exec)

From Layla Fry (100 Director of Special Projects) on behalf of Juan Sánchez (100 Exec)
Sent Wednesday, July 25, 2007 8 43 PM
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 'Raul Alvarez@ci austin tx us', 'Lee Leffingwell@ci austin tx us', 'Will Wynn@ci austin tx us',
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Subject Southwest Key Public Statement to City Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 25, 2007

CONTACT Dr. Juan Sánchez
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 Southwest Key Programs
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Southwest Key's Public Statement to the Austin City Council

AUSTIN, TX - Southwest Key Programs is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to advocate for children worldwide and to positively impact their lives, the lives of their families and the communities in which they live

Southwest Key has been a pioneer in the development of alternatives to detention and the institutionalization of children. Our organization has spent the last twenty years working hard to lead by example, showing that children are best served in their own homes and communities whenever possible. Therefore, it is necessary that we set the record straight by explaining that Southwest Key does not operate detention facilities as this would be contrary to our mission, philosophy and all the energy and time we have invested in advocating for improved services to children. In fact, we have labored for the last two decades to create humane, strength-based, culturally-competent child and family-centered alternatives to detention and incarceration.

The following are some basic facts we would like to share about our work with unaccompanied minors

- Southwest Key operates eight shelters for unaccompanied immigrant minors. The individuals who have recently criticized our work have never visited Southwest Key and therefore are not in a position to espouse an opinion on the quality of the services we provide to thousands of unaccompanied minors each year in our shelters. We encourage you to instead refer to the informed opinion expressed by those who have visited our shelters and have published articles in the last few years describing the programs we operate. [See attached list of news articles]
- Our shelters are under the umbrella of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (specifically managed by the Office of Refugee Resettlement). They are neither managed nor funded by the Department of Homeland Security or Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Further, we comply with the Flores v. Reno settlement which dictates to the federal government (and all those that contract with the government) the rights of these unaccompanied minor children and the specific services to be provided to them. Our programs and staff have been recognized by our funders as model programs.
- Our shelters are held accountable at the federal, state, and local levels. They are closely monitored by project officers from the Office of Refugee Resettlement who visit each program annually to conduct a thorough audit. Further, our shelters are closely monitored by their respective state child residential licensing agencies and by each city in reference to health and building codes. Again, we pride ourselves on exceeding the basic expectations set forth by these agencies.
- The primary goal of our unaccompanied minors shelter program, which is set forth by our contract with the federal government, is to reunify immigrant youth with their families within in the United States or in their country of origin.

7/26/2007

serving that community has been low performing for four consecutive years and is in danger of being closed by the Texas Education Agency. With this in mind, members of our Community Advisory Council requested that Southwest Key begin the process of establishing a college preparatory middle school in this neighborhood. Our goal is to build a great middle school, laying a foundation for kids to go onto high school and college.

Southwest Key wants to work in partnership with every group that is interested in bridging Austin's opportunity gap. We would like to extend an invitation to any interested group or individual to sit down with us to determine how we can make a major impact in this community **TOGETHER**. Our hope is that we can create a coalition of individuals and organizations that would be a powerful and influential force for change. Together we can all work for the betterment of the entire City of Austin.

We continue to be excited to partner with the City of Austin and various other agencies to provide vital services to this Community that has historically been underserved. Should you have any questions regarding Southwest Key Programs, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Juan Sánchez, El Presidente/CEO and Founder, at 512 462 2181 or via email at jsanchez@swkey.org.

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News Clippings on Southwest Key Programs

Goodwill Ambassador Jolie visits detained children in Arizona

UNHCR The United Refugee Agency – 4/29/04

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/print?tbl=NEWS&id=4090d9147>

An in-between place Southwest Key keeps teen migrants afloat between 'here' and 'there'

Brownsville Herald – July 21, 2007

<http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/common/printer/view.php?db=brownsville&id=78560>

Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees Angelina Jolie Her Mission and Motherhood

Interview with Angelina Jolie and her visit to Southwest Key

Anderson Cooper 360 – 6/20/06

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/060620/acd.01.html>

<http://www.refugees.org/article.aspx?id=1647>

Cover Story Caution

San Diego Reader – February 3, 2005

<http://www.sreader.com/php/cover.php?mode=print&id=20050203>

2 Honduran, Guatemalan youths are among the lucky few

Arizona Daily Star – 12/17/2006

<http://www.azstarnet.com/sn/printDS/160753>

Communities Helping Kids

Why diversion, outreach, and counseling programs serve troubled children -- and society -- better than prisons

American Prospect – August 14, 2005

<http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=10122>

Group Plans East Austin Campus

Austin Business Journal – March 31-April 6, 2006

<http://austin.bizjournals.com/austin/stories/2006/04/03/story4.html>

Southwest Key Making a Difference

KVUE News - 3-17-2006

<http://www.swkey.org/Multimedia/SWKey.mov>

Project Plans Needed East Austin School

Daily Texan – 2/5/07

<http://www.dailytexanonline.com/media/paper410/sections/20070205StateLocal.html>

- **Nonprofit wants to build new school in East Austin**

- New 8 Austin – 2 2 2007

- http://www.news8austin.com/content/your_news/default.asp?ArID=178628