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Navidad in the Neighborhood Celebrates the Season with Spaghetti Warehouse *Gives 600 Books & Gifts at Free Lunch Hosted by West End Restaurant*

DALLAS, TX (Dec. 7, 2009) – Navidad in the Neighborhood, celebrates another year of holiday cheer by partnering with **Spaghetti Warehouse** in the West End and distributing books & gifts to low income children at a special party on Dec. 12. During the day, Spaghetti Warehouse will be closed to the public to host local children to a free Italian lunch. Approximately 600 youth, from neighborhood elementary schools, churches and social service agencies will experience a memorable day filled with food, fun and laughter.

Navidad, a non-profit organization who collects books, learning toys and sports equipment year-round will provide books from their **Fall into Reading** project funded in part by the **Southwest Livestock & Exposition Show** and **All Smiles Dental Centers**. Research has confirmed that the critical factor determining whether or not a child becomes a reader is his or her access to reading materials (*First Book National Book Bank*). The ratio of books to children in middle-income neighborhoods is approximately 13 books per child and the ratio of books in low income neighborhoods is 1 book per 300 children.

Continuing with the **Fall into Reading** project, **Navidad** provided over 1125 books to the 15 elementary schools in District 2 during a Holiday Cheer celebration this past Thursday. Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Pauline Medrano was extremely pleased with the continued support to her district schools. "Our children need to be encouraged to continue reading, **Navidad** just made this a little easier." **Navidad** is serving a critical need for putting more books directly into the hands of children.

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“**Spaghetti Warehouse** is committed to the communities we serve and proud to support the efforts of organizations like **Navidad in the Neighborhood**,” said spokesperson Enrique Carranza. “We hope to spread some joy and invite children to visit our West End neighborhood and encourage them to continue reading over the winter school break.”

In addition to the free lunch and book, each child will receive a draw string back pack with a toothbrush and toothpaste courtesy of **All Smiles Dental Centers** and a “stocking stuffer” gift courtesy of a long time **Navidad** supporter, the **U. S. Marines Toys for Tots** program. Recently, in celebration of the restaurant’s 37th year anniversary, **Spaghetti Warehouse** made a donation of 10% of their profits for the night of Nov. 18 to help the Marines give more gifts to needy children.

For sponsorship information, media interviews or photo opportunities call Rosanne Ortega at 214-893-4392.

2009 Navidad Sponsors: Aetna, All Smiles Dental, Blue Mesa Grill, Carcon Inc., Carol Martinez State Farm, Century 21: All Islands, City of Dallas Fair Park, Coca-Cola North Texas Bottling Co., Comerica Bank, Dallas Market Center, Dallas Margarita Society, Deloitte, DFW Hispanic Bankers Assoc., DJ Global Café, Elrod’s, Fannie Mae, First Book, Hispanic Contractors Assoc. of DFW, Keystone Automotive, Logisticorp, Mastercraft, Mattel, Met Life: New England Financial, MGA Flooring, Pizza Patron, Raytheon, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Southwestern Exposition Livestock Show, Strategic Events, Target, Texas Instruments Exel, The Hispanic Circle, The Social List, TXU Energy, U.S. Marines Toys for Tots and Wal-Mart Optical **Media Sponsors:** Al Dia, Latino Leaders Magazine, SI TV, Time Warner Cable & Univision KUVN 23 TV

About Navidad:

Navidad in the Neighborhood is a 21 year-old 501(c) 3 nonprofit that overall distributed more than 55,000 gifts changing lives last year, helping families build healthy, well-rounded youth through partnerships with almost 100 local social service agencies, schools, churches and recreation centers in Dallas, Tarrant, Collin, Johnson and Denton counties. Navidad encourages children to read and get active through play by giving away new books through its **Fall into Reading** projects and sports balls through its **Spring into Sports** projects. In addition, elementary students participate during the **Saturday Serve: Youth Community Service Project** annually. It is the only organization in DFW whose sole mission is to collect books, learning toys and sports equipment year-round through the volunteerism of corporations and individuals. For more information on Navidad, visit www.navidaddfw.org.

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