Father John A. Dinneen, S.J.

HISPANIC ALUMNI COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Chestnut Hill, MA (March 15, 2004) -- The Archbishop Oscar A. Romero Scholarship Committee is honored to announce Magnolia Contreras ‘90 as the recipient of the 2004 Father John A. Dinneen, S.J. Hispanic Alumni Community Service Award.

Ms. Magnolia Contreras’ contribution, dedication, and service to her community exemplify the ideals of Archbishop Romero and Father Dinneen’s commitment, leadership and service to the Latino Community.

As an immigrant to the United States from the Dominican Republic, Ms. Contreras was the first in her family to graduate from college. Ms. Contreras is a 1990 graduate of the Boston College School of Arts and Sciences with a concentration in psychology. She later received her master’s degree in Social Work from Simmons College, writing her masters thesis on the mental health needs of Latino children.

Ms. Contreras is dedicated to servicing others. She is a committed and active member of the Latino community, especially in her home city of Lynn and Essex County. Currently, Ms. Contreras serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Lynn Community Health Center (Finance Committee), the Lynn Economic Opportunity, Inc., Trustee of the Essex County Community Foundation, and serves as a volunteer community liaison for the Office of State Senator Thomas McGee. In addition, she has served on the boards of Catholic Charities North (2002), My Brothers Table (1997), and Commonwealth Coalition (Vice Chair) (1999-2001).

Ms. Contreras’ commitment to service and community is evident in her volunteerism as well as her career. She has dedicated much of her career to forming, influencing, and advocating for HIV/AIDS and health public policy issues. Currently, she is the Director of Public Policy & Community Relations for the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts. She is responsible for overseeing the public policy and advocacy unit which includes the implementation and management of statewide HIV/AIDS public policy and advocacy agenda through collaborative and coalition building strategies. In addition, she is responsible for directing and managing a 10 million dollar budget as a member of a six person senior management team. Prior to holding this position she served as Director of Legislative Affairs for the National Association of Social Workers Massachusetts Chapter. She was responsible for developing, implementing, and coordinating all activities relating to the Associations’ legislative agenda, education, and mobilization of the membership. As the Assistant Director of HIV and Social Services for the Lynn Community Health Center, Inc. she operationalized and managed the development of numerous cancer and HIV/AIDS health screening service programs for hard to reach, multilingual, disenfranchised health center populations.
Ms. Contreras was selected as the interpreter for the President of the Dominican Republic His Majesty Hipolito Mejia during his visit to the City of Lynn in 2002. She also coordinated and lead the first bilingual and bicultural legislative candidate debate for Lynn District 6 House of Representative open seat election. She has received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for Women’s Health Leadership (2002), Simmons College School of Social Work Leadership Award (1996-1998), Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers Employee Award (1995), and was featured in the Boston College Alumni Magazine, *Damage Control* (1994). This article focused on her work with poor and disenfranchised populations.

Ms. Contreras exemplifies Archbishop Oscar A. Romero’s ideals to work for justice and human dignity and Father John A. Dinneen’s, S.J. commitment to service and leadership in the Latino Community. Previous Hispanic Alumni Community Service Award recipients include Andres Tejada, Jose Andrade, Christian Leon, Gibran Rivera, and Julie Muniz.

For more information contact Anita Ulloa at (617) 552-3333, or ulloa@bc.edu.