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For Immediate Release

Human Services Department to Honor Education Works Participants at Santa Fe Luncheon Tomorrow

State-funded Program Helps Low-Income Parents Pay for College

Santa Fe, June 11, 2007 – The New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) will honor 24 Santa Fe County Education Works Program participants during a luncheon tomorrow, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Mission Café, 239 E. De Vargas St. in Santa Fe.

The Education Works Program is a state-funded program administered by the HSD that provides assistance to low-income parents who are attending college. “The goal of Education Works is to help our clients become financially self sufficient,” said Katie Falls, HSD Deputy Secretary. “Going to college and earning a degree is the best way to accomplish this, and we commend each-and-every participant for taking this important step in improving their lives and the lives of their families.”

Several of the participants will be honored for earning Associates Degrees this year. One student received her degree in Computer Information Technology (CIT) from the Santa Fe Community College and has already been hired by a local IT company. “This program made all the difference to me,” said the Education Works participant who did not want to be identified. “It helped me with child care services and provided enough cash assistance for us to survive while I was in school. Now I hope to never have to rely on public assistance again because with my degree I can earn enough to support my family.”

The Education Works Program is available statewide for clients of HSD’s Income Support Division (ISD) who have dependent child(ren) and very low incomes (below 85 percent of the Federal Poverty Level). The program requires participants to be full-time students for up to 24 months. “This program is instrumental to so many families who are working hard to improve their earnings,” said Fred Sandoval ISD Director. “I believe that each participant is a true success story.”

Each year legislators appropriate funding for the Education Works Program. This fiscal year \$2 million was allocated to the program, which is helping nearly 400 clients across the state get a college education.

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