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CONTACT: 480 – 983-1445

E-mail: books@hisi.org

2008 'Living the Dream' Award Recipient Compiled Letters High School Students Document Immigration Plight in New Book

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A compelling account of the struggle that students without legal status in the U.S. are facing has taken the form of a bilingual book. Under the title of *Documented Dreams*, the Arizona-based Hispanic Institute of Social Issues (HISI) has published a collection of letters written by students from Gateway Early College High School, and compiled by the school's principal—and 2008 'Living the Dream' award recipient—Yvonne Watterson

The letters were written in response to the anonymous and generous donations by people from the community, who made financial contributions to help students unable to qualify for in-state tuition, continue taking college classes. The group of High School students then decided to write thank you letters to show their appreciation.

Watterson revealed that after reading the letters from students, "a book seemed the obvious way to capture forever their collective thanks. The students wanted to thank the strangers who were making their continued college education a reality. They could only convey their gratitude anonymously, from the shadows."

The idea for a book emerged simultaneously with the defeat in the U.S. Senate of the Dream Act last Fall. Millions of students were hoping to regularize their status and be able to continue with their education.

"Mrs. Watterson contacted us, we read the letters, and immediately jumped into giving form to the book project", stated Eduardo Barraza, HISI's director. "We recognize that we are living in a historical turning point; publishing the students' letters is an attempt to ensure we accurately record history as it happens before our eyes, and in the voice of its protagonists: the students themselves."

Documented Dreams is a book of enormous human value, mainly because it symbolizes the aspirations of millions of students caught in a sociopolitical midpoint. The book will further contribute to the efforts of keeping students taking college classes at this early college program, as it will be used as a tuition fund-raising tool.

For further information visit www.hisi.org/books.html or call 480 – 983–1445.

Book Details: Documented Dreams • Edited and compiled by Yvonne Watterson • Photographs by Eduardo Barraza • ISBN 13: 978-0-9797814-3-8 • Paperback • Language: Bilingual in English and Spanish. \$25.00 Minimum Donation

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