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**The *Network for a Healthy California—Central Valley Region Latino Campaign*
Celebrates Latino Health Awareness Month to Empower Families
to Make Health a Priority**

*Latino Moms Learn Ways to Continue “Sustaining Health for Our Generation”
During These Tough Economic Times*

FRESNO, Calif., September 18, 2009 – The *Network for a Healthy California—Central Valley Region Latino Campaign* and Fresno Parks and Recreation tonight hosted Movies in the Park at Eaton Plaza in Fresno as part of this year’s Latino Health Awareness Month, a statewide effort to empower Latinos to make health a priority for themselves and their families – a change that will sustain health for future generations. The festive event offered educational resources, including ideas on how to eat right when money’s tight, healthy budget-friendly cooking demonstrations and fun ways to get active to adopt lifelong healthy changes.

“Many Latino moms are facing challenges during these tough economic times. Latino Health Awareness Month is one of the many ways the *Latino Campaign* is helping families in Fresno be Champions for Change who take small steps – like buying fruits and vegetables in season and going for walks together – to sustain health for themselves and their families, even on a tight budget,” said Esther Rivera, coordinator, *Network for a Healthy California—Central Valley Region Latino Campaign*.

Sixty nine percent of low-income California Latino adults are either overweight or obese¹. In Fresno County, 76% percent of Latinos ages 18 and above were overweight or obese in 2007. Through Latino Health Awareness Month events, the *Latino Campaign* provides tips and tools to help low-income Latino families across California take charge of their families’ health to help reduce their risk of serious health problems like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer.

Tonight’s fun-filled evening inspired local participants with activities like physical activity demonstrations, traditional dances from Mexico and food sampling. Prizes were awarded to local elementary students, winners of the “How Healthy Am I?” coloring contest.

As part of the event, the *Network* also showcased some of its new Spanish-language radio ads featuring a female Mariachi band. The cheerful spots give a new spin to traditional “corridos” – a

¹ University of California Los Angeles Center for Health Policy Research. California Health Interview Survey 2007 , Adult AskCHIS internet data system, BMI using Race-UCLA-CHPR, <200%FPL; 2007.

regional music style popular in Mexico – transforming the lyrics into catchy messages that empower the Latino community to make health a priority for themselves and their families. The ads began airing in June and will continue to play through October.

The Movies in the Park event in Fresno is an example of how the *Network for a Healthy California—Central Valley Region Latino Campaign* works to eliminate the disparities that place low-income Latino families at greater risk of obesity and other serious health problems by empowering them to make healthy choices for themselves, their families and communities.

“It’s time for low-income Latinos to stand up for healthy change so we can turn the tide on obesity and the health problems that follow,” said Rivera. “Tonight’s event is a powerful example of how the *Network* encourages more and more families from throughout the Central Valley to join our movement and make healthy living a priority in the Latino community.”

This was one of several statewide Latino Health Awareness Month events held throughout California during September. To find an event near you or for more information about the *Network for a Healthy California*, how to become a Champion for Change and how food stamps can increase low-income California Latinos’ food budget, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net.

About the *Network for a Healthy California*

The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* is a public health effort working with hundreds of partners and organizations to empower low-income Californians to live healthier lives through good nutrition and physical activity. Funding is from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). For food stamp information, call 877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net.

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