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BENEFIT FOR MANO A MANO HONORING ZARELA MARTINEZ A Pioneer Mexican Chef and Restaurateur

New York, NY, September 15, 2011 – Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders announces a benefit honoring Zarela Martinez, a pioneer Mexican chef and restaurateur who has been an inspiration to many and has paved the way and influenced many upcoming Mexican chefs in New York.

A native of the Sonoran border town of Agua Prieta, Zarela Martinez is a renowned cultural interpreter between Mexico and the United States through the medium of food. For 23 years her eponymous “Zarela” set standards of authenticity among New York Mexican restaurants. A sought-after speaker and consultant for major corporations, she also wrote the pioneering cookbooks *Food from My Heart*, *The Food and Life of Oaxaca*, and *Zarela's Veracruz*; it was during this period of research for her books that she developed a passion and love for her culture and a desire to have it be understood. Her popular website www.zarela.com is an invaluable resource for those people interested in Mexican food and culture.

This benefit will enable Mano a Mano to continue offering its free and low-cost cultural programming to members of the community, including Mexicanidad, a series of classes on Nahuatl, music, dance, art and other aspects of Mexican culture. The event will be held at the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, 20 Cooper Square, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10003 on Tuesday, September 27, 2011 at 6:00 pm. The event will offer an evening of great food, fun and fellowship, including: a silent auction, tasting menu and cocktails. Nine of New York’s most celebrated Mexican restaurants; Café Frida, Centrico, Chavela’s, Fonda, La Palapa, Ofrenda, Papatzul, Sueños, and Toloache will join Mano a Mano in honoring Zarela’s legacy and influence in the Mexican cuisine here in New York.

For ticket information: www.tinyurl.com/zarela

Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders is a New York-based non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating Mexican culture and promoting the understanding of Mexican traditions in New York through Mexicanidad, an arts and culture program, and annual celebrations of holidays (Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos; Christmas/Posadas y Pastorelas), as well as festivals, concerts, performances, processions, installations and seminars. Mexicans and New York area residents celebrate the richness and diversity of Mexican arts in five key areas: music, dance, visual arts, verbal arts and ritual, and culinary traditions. www.manoamano.us

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