



For Immediate Release

## Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders Announces New Executive Director

NEW YORK, December 20, 2010, Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders, an arts and culture organization promoting Mexican traditions in New York, announced today that Emily Socolov, Ph. D., is leaving her position as Executive Director in order to pursue other opportunities, effective December 31, 2010. She will continue to serve the organization as a member of its Executive Board.

Juan Carlos Aguirre, currently serving as Program Director at Mano a Mano will assume the duties of Executive Director in 2011. Mr. Aguirre brings an extensive range of experience in the public sector and the nonprofit world to his new position. Born in Mexico and raised in Michoacán and the State of Mexico, he arrived in New York at the age of 10. A resident of Jackson Heights, Queens, he served in the US Navy and received a Bachelor of Science at St. John's University. His advanced training includes the Leadership Development Course for Mexican community leaders, presented by the General Consulate of Mexico in New York with the City University of New York (CUNY), and the School of Public Affairs at Baruch College. He also received a Non-Profit Management Certificate (Baruch College, Hispanic Leadership Institute) and attended the Summer Institute in Latino Studies (Fordham University, Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education).

Mr. Aguirre has worked at the Asociación Tepeyac of New York for four years in various positions. As Caseworker in the after school program he built strategic relationships with other community-based organizations, schools and agencies citywide. He worked closely with individual clients to develop personal recovery plans after the 9/11 tragedy and presented cases before the 9/11 Unmet Needs Roundtable to advocate for economic assistance for Mexicans who were affected by those tragic events. Aguirre also served as ESL coordinator at Tepeyac.

Aguirre has been instrumental in brokering relationships between the Mexican immigrant community and the Catholic Church. He coordinates the annual mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe on December 12th. At Mano a Mano, he has headed the Faith Based Initiative and is coordinating the upcoming Conference: Mexican Catholics in New York: Faith and Community to be held in March of 2011, in coordination with the Archdiocese of New York.

Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders  
@ Brooklyn Music School  
126 Saint Felix Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Emily Socolov received her Ph.D. in Mexican Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania and a Licentiate in Museum Studies from the National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico. She has researched, written and taught on traditional Mexican culture for over thirty years. She has collaborated extensively with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in fieldwork, teacher training and festival presentation. Socolov has worked with Mano a Mano for eight years, joining the initiative as Project Director at the Center for Traditional Music and Dance. In 2006, she led the organization to become an independent non-profit 501(c)3.

Mano a Mano has since become the leading arts and culture organization serving the Mexican immigrant community in New York through cultural presentations, educational programs and artist development. The organization has an eight-year history of producing annual events, including Day of the Dead (St. Mark's Church in the Bowery), Posadas y Pastorelas (Museum of the City of New York) and Immigrant Heritage Week (various locations). Establishing partnerships with the major cultural institutions in New York City, Mano a Mano has presented at the Museum of the City of New York, the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park Conservancy, The National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian), El Museo del Barrio, The American Folk Art Museum, Lincoln Center Out-Of- Doors, the American Indian Community House, the Taller Boricua and many others. The *Mexicanidad* program, based at the Brooklyn Music School, has introduced scores of students – children, teens and adults, Mexican and non-Mexican alike – to the richness of Mexican music, dance and visual arts. The immigrant artist initiative at Mano a Mano, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, is in the final phase of redesigning the website and launching an Immigrant Artists Portal in Spring 2011.

Socolov remains deeply committed to Mano a Mano and will continue as an active Board Member. She is confident that Juan Carlos Aguirre will take Mano a Mano to new heights. "Juan Carlos is rightly acclaimed for his commitment and advocacy on behalf of the Mexican immigrant community, and for his passion for education as the key to building strong community, as well as his composed and focused personality. He is an ideal leader for Mano a Mano and for the Mexican community. I will support him and the organization in every way possible going forward," says Socolov.

Juan Carlos Aguirre may be reached for comment at: [jaguirre@manoamano.us](mailto:jaguirre@manoamano.us) or 212 587-3070. Photo attached.

#### About Mano a Mano

Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders is a nonprofit organization (501(c) 3) in its tenth year of presenting major collaborative cultural events in the New York City area. Composed of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans of many generations and occupations, the Mano a Mano team strives to present the rich range of Mexican cultural forms. Visit our website to learn more about our active calendar of events, our new educational program, *Mexicanidad*, and our immigrant artist development initiative: [www.manoamano.us](http://www.manoamano.us)

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