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## **CEDC FILLMORE CENTRAL STATION RESIDENT CHOSEN TO BE INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER AT RURAL LISC CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON DC**

**Ventura, CA – [May 30, 2013]** – Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) is happy to announce that one of its own residents has been chosen to be an inspirational speaker at the national Rural LISC conference in Washington DC on June 6, 2013. Angelica Amezcua, who lives at CEDC's Fillmore Central Station Apartments in Fillmore, was chosen as one of three motivational speakers from across the country to speak and share their personal story about how affordable housing has transformed their lives to affordable housing advocates in Washington DC.

Angelica came to the U.S. from Mexico with her family in 2000 when she was only 11 and entered the seventh grade not knowing a word of English. Before moving into Fillmore Central Station Apartments, her family (two parents and four siblings) lived in substandard housing moving six different times -- always living in one room. She often had to continue studying even when the rest of her family went to sleep in those one-room homes. She says, "My parents and siblings were very understanding and would not mind sleeping with the lights on." Despite these challenges, she went on to not only learn English, but also went on to graduate among the top 10 students in her high school.

Angelica has learned a lot from her family. One day, when Angelica was young, Thomas, her father, and Concepcion, her mother, took her with them to work in the fields to pick lemons. "My father told me, in Spanish, that he had taken her to work not to help, but for her to realize how difficult life is for someone who does not have an education," she says. "My father had only graduated from third grade, and my mother graduated from high school in Mexico. They wanted their children to have a better life than they have had as immigrants and agricultural workers. These two individuals instilled in me the values of hard work, determination, and most importantly, the value of education," she says. This spurred her on to pursue a higher education.

Angelica applied to college even though a high school counselor once told her that she "wasn't college material" because he thought her English language skills were too limited. "The feeling of frustration and incapability haunted my young mind," she says. "Learning English and the language barriers that I face as an English learner have always been one of my biggest obstacles." She explains that the obstacles weren't her inability to understand or communicate

in English, but rather the discrimination and intimidation she faced because of her 'inability to speak proper English.' She saw these obstacles ultimately as stepping stones, spurring her on to overcome the problems she faced. Angelica completed her undergraduate degree at California State University at Northridge (CSUN) in sociolinguistics (the study of language and society) with a Magna Cum Laude and other academic honors, and is still enrolled at CSUN currently working on her Master's Degree in Chicano/Chicana studies and plans to graduate with honors in Spring 2014. Once she completes that degree, she hopes to get her Doctorate degree. Her ultimate ambition is to become a Professor of sociolinguistic and Chicano/a studies and to be an activist in her community to help underrepresented students to achieve higher educational goals.

Next week, Angelica will travel to Washington DC with her mom and dad to speak about her personal story and how moving into Fillmore Central Station Apartments have positively impacted her and her family's lives. Angelica says: "I feel privileged and honored to have been chosen to represent CEDC. There are no words to express the joy I feel. I am really thankful for having amazing people in my life who are always opening doors for my academic and personal growth like this one. Most importantly, I want to highlight the importance and the need for more affordable housing. I want to share my story and the story of all of who have been positively impacted by living in an affordable housing and are given the privilege to finally have a place to call home."

#### **About CEDC**

CEDC is a private non-profit community development corporation that provides comprehensive housing services, through a community building approach, in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Since its incorporation in 1981, CEDC has built 1,634 units of affordable for-sale and multi-family rental homes, and manages 973 affordable rental units. CEDC's NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Center has assisted more than 817 families into home ownership through education, counseling, and lending services since 2004. This includes more than \$110 million in first and second mortgage financing and down payment assistance. CEDC is a chartered member of NeighborWorks®, a national network of more than 235 community development and affordable housing organizations. CEDC received the prestigious "Affordable Builder of the Year" award from Build it Green in 2012. This year marks CEDC's 32nd year of operation.

#### **About LISC**

In 1995, LISC launched Rural LISC to expand its reach beyond urban areas to include rural communities. Today, Rural LISC partners with 58 community development corporations (CDCs) and Rural Community Assistance Corporation and Fahe working to transform distressed communities in 1,051 counties across 39 states. Rural LISC is dedicated to helping rural Americans transform distressed rural communities into healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity—good places to work, do business and raise children. We work to build the capacity of resident-led rural community development corporations (CDCs), increase their production and impact, demonstrate the value of investing in and through rural CDCs and make the resource and policy environment more supportive of rural CDCs and their work.

[http://www.lisc.org/rural\\_lisc/](http://www.lisc.org/rural_lisc/)

**About Fillmore Central Station Apartments:**

The development is home to farmworkers and local lower-income families and features a mix of affordable rental and ownership homes. The housing complex has a total of 29 homes – 21 are affordable rental homes and eight other townhomes are owned by local families living in the Fillmore area earning between 30-50 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). The homes have three bedrooms and two bathrooms each, and range in size from 1,140 to 1,337 square feet. The development also features a community room, five courtyards, a tot lot, and on-site garage parking. A landscaped bike path runs alongside the community with a decorative railing to match the existing bike path near Fillmore City Hall. The site is two blocks east of the city's downtown center, close to shopping, transportation and other services. The community tends a community garden which yields many vegetables and herbs for all to enjoy.

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