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Christine Nicpon Begins Illinois Early Childhood Fellowship at Latino Policy Forum

(CHICAGO) – Christine Nicpon was named an Illinois Early Childhood Fellow this summer and recently began her work at the Latino Policy Forum. Selected through a highly competitive process, Illinois Early Childhood Fellows serve for two years with leading public policy and systems change organizations.

Christine's experience includes research, advocacy, and case management in the areas of social justice, immigration, teen parenting, child welfare, and youth experiencing homelessness. She earned her Masters of Arts in Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology at Franklin & Marshall College.

"The Fellowship helps prepare diverse new leaders for the field of early childhood, in the hope that the policies we make in Illinois will ensure that children of all our communities get the best possible start in life," said Edith Njuguna, Senior Program Officer at Grand Victoria Foundation and co-chair of the Fellowship.

Phyllis Glink, Executive Director of the Irving Harris Foundation and co-chair of the Fellowship added, "We are delighted to welcome the new Fellows to our growing network and to be working with the distinguished host organizations who partner with us to cultivate the pipeline of leaders in our field."

During the Fellowship, these emerging leaders gain hands on experiences in advocacy, policy making, and systems building. They participate in seminars, networking events, and training to enhance their professional and leadership skills. Fellows also gain access to mentors recognized nationally in the early childhood community.

"As a multi-issue advocacy organization, the Latino Policy Forum works to ameliorate the education achievement gap for Latino students. Our work begins by improving access to high-quality early childhood education—but success is as much about tackling current disparities as it is about building a pipeline of teachers, advocates, and civic leaders who are able to carry forth this work in the future," said Sylvia Puente, executive director of the Latino Policy Forum. "That's why we're so pleased to have Christine working with us to support this work—not only for her two-year tenure in our office, but throughout her career as an advocate for educational equity."

The other members of the 2013-2015 cohort of Fellows are serving at the following host organizations: **Sergio Hernandez, Jr.** at **Illinois Voices for Children**, **Deana R. Spencer** and the **Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics**, **Liliana Velázquez** at **The Ounce of Prevention Fund**, and **Edna Navarro-Vidaurre** at **Illinois Action for Children**.

The Illinois Early Childhood Fellows program was founded in 2009, with the sponsorship of The Boeing Company, Grand Victoria Foundation, Irving Harris Foundation, McCormick Foundation, and J. B. and M. K. Pritzker Family Foundation. Evanston Community Foundation is the fiscal sponsor, and the program is managed by Erikson Institute. The Joyce Foundation was a founding partner and managed the program in its first two years. Earlier this year, an anonymous donor became a new supporter of the Fellowship. To learn more, please visit www.ilearlychildhoodfellows.org.

The Latino Policy Forum is the only organization in the Chicago area that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. The Forum strives to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies, and engage diverse sectors of the community. It does this by conducting analysis to inform, influence and lead, all with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future. For more information, visit www.latinopolicyforum.org.

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