

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **St. Martin de Porres Students Honored as Illinois Student Assistance Commission Announces 2010 Illinois State Scholar Honorees**

Waukegan, Illinois, December 15, 2009 - The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) recently recognized 19,345 high school students from 752 different schools from across the state as 2010 "Illinois State Scholars." St. Martin de Porres High (SMdP) seniors Octavio Brindis and Paola Cazares were two of Lake County's recipients.

Illinois State Scholar winners rank in the top ten percent of high school seniors. Selection is based on SAT, ACT and/or Prairie State Achievement Exam scores, and/or class rank at the end of the junior year.

"Excellent high school grades are tremendously important for laying the groundwork for future college success," said ISAC Executive Director Andrew Davis. "Illinois State Scholars are the best and the brightest in our state's high schools, and we salute them, their families and their teachers on this achievement."

While the prestigious recognition does not include a monetary award, recipients are encouraged to cite the award on applications for college admission and scholarships.

Brindis was also recognized earlier this year when he became the first Lake County resident to win the prestigious Discover Scholarship Award from Discover Corp., an honor that carries with it a \$30,000 college scholarship.

"Octavio and Paola demonstrate excellence in all facets of the mission of St. Martin de Porres High School. They are dedicated to academic excellence, they have outstanding performance in their job internships, and they are committed and involved members in our program to serve others by being active in community service projects," said SMdP Principal Mike Odiotti.

### **About the ISAC**

Originally formed as the Illinois State Scholarship Commission in 1957, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission provides students of all ages and backgrounds with the resources and support to obtain financial aid for higher education. A state agency, ISAC has paved the path to post-secondary education with innovative programs for over 50 years. More than a half million Illinois State Scholars have been recognized by ISAC since the program's inception. The Commission provides educational funding with student loans, as a loan guarantor and via numerous public programs such as the Monetary Award Program, the Illinois Veteran Grant and the College Illinois!® 529 Prepaid Tuition Program. Last year alone, ISAC continued its mission to make college accessible and affordable for Illinois students by issuing 186,000 grants and scholarships totaling nearly \$431 million.

### **About St. Martin de Porres High School**

A member of the national Cristo Rey Network, St Martin de Porres High School (SMdP) is a Catholic, coed, college preparatory school serving students primarily from Waukegan and North Chicago. The school is committed to academic excellence made affordable for young people of limited options through each student's participation in the Hire4Ed (Corporate Internship) Program. SMdP opened in the Fall of 2004 with over 100 students and 23 business partners. Today SMdP serves more than 225 students and enjoys partnerships with more than 60 business partners. A member of the Archdiocese of Chicago, SMdP became the first Catholic high school in Lake County to open in more than 40 years.