

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

Jenifer Marr Rodriguez
St. Martin de Porres High School
847-244-6895 ext. 230
847-244-8237 fax
jmarr@smdpwaukee.org
www.smdpwaukee.org

Renowned Economist Diane Swonk Establishes Scholarship at St. Martin de Porres High School

Waukegan, Illinois, November 24, 2008 — One of the most sought-after economists in the world, Diane Swonk has recently made a donation to St. Martin de Porres High School (SMdP) in Waukegan to begin a scholarship in memory of Raphael E. Vidal. Swonk visited the SMdP campus earlier this month to honor Vidal, a family friend who passed away in August, well before his true potential as an adult could be realized.

The following students, who have excelled in the classroom and in SMdP's unique Hire4Ed work-study program, have been named Vidal Scholars for the 2008-2009 academic year:

Seniors: Xiomara Hernandez (Waukegan), Kassandra Padilla (Waukegan)

Juniors: Daniel Aguirre (Waukegan), Octavio Brindis (Waukegan), Vivian Fajardo (Waukegan), Jenny Morales (Waukegan), Mariana Pizano (Waukegan)

Sophomores: Nayely Arellano (Waukegan), Daisy Arevalo (Waukegan), Nancy Baca (Waukegan), Yvette Bahena (Waukegan), Brisbia Zavala (Waukegan)

Freshmen: Ingrid De la Cruz (Waukegan), Christian Hernandez (Zion), Tania Hernandez (Waukegan), Francisco Martinez (Waukegan), Celina Morales (Waukegan)

Swonk, Senior Managing Director and Chief Economist at Chicago-based Mesirow Financial, has been named one of the top forecasters in the country by *The Wall Street Journal*. She was proud to make this significant donation to honor Raphael and his family and to help those in Northeast Lake County seeking a bright future through a quality college preparatory education.

"This gift," Swonk says, "is made to remind those who think that their future is limited are wrong. Anything is possible when one is given a chance to use their mind in productive and creative ways, no matter what race or socioeconomic background they come from."

Swonk went on to remark that, "Human capital is the most valuable asset that this country has, and I refuse to stand by and watch us lose one of our greatest gifts, the potential of our children. St. Martin de Porres provided me with the most productive way to make my investment in education for those most at need pay off. My respect for them and their program goes extremely deep."

SMdP President Rev. Charles Bolser, C.S.V. welcomed Swonk to Waukegan when she visited and thanked her for her generosity.

"I want to express my appreciation to Diane for her generous assistance to our students," Fr. Bolser says. "We offer a unique and important option for the young women and men of our community. It is our mission to enable them to reach within themselves to find their giftedness – their potential – and learn how to strive to succeed. We hope that each of them will choose to become fully human – fully alive."

In addition to Diane's support, Mesirow Financial is also a proud corporate supporter of schools in the Cristo Rey Network, and has helped approximately 28 students since 2002.

A member of the nationally-recognized Cristo Rey Network®, St. Martin de Porres High School in Waukegan provides a Catholic, college preparatory education to the young men and women of Lake County who would not otherwise have such an opportunity due to their families' limited financial resources. Students' academic excellence is made affordable through each student's participation in SMdP's Hire4Ed work-study program. SMdP opened in the Fall of 2004 with 97 students and 23 business partners. Today SMdP serves more than 220 students and enjoys partnerships with more than 50 Hire4Ed 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.

###

