

Media Release

08/18/09 – United Way of Central New Mexico Strengthens Community through Smart Partnerships

<http://www.ARCASOpeningDoors.org>

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Albuquerque Partnerships Create Growing Opportunities

Victoria's Secret Direct Provides over 350 Volunteer Hours to Support ARCA

Albuquerque, NM – For 12 years, Victoria's Secret Direct in Rio Rancho has celebrated the beginning of their annual United Way campaign by facilitating a week long adventure in community volunteerism. "One year we built a playground," said Beverly McMillan, Director of Sales, Victoria's Secret Direct (VSD). "When we arrived on site the project coordinator asked how many of us were trained in using power tools. No one raised their hand. Finally, one of our staff suggested the coordinator give us a quick lesson. By the end of the week the playground looked beautiful and there was no doubt in anyone's minds that when there is a job to be done, we do it."

“United Way of Central New Mexico looks at the community,” said Ted Jurney Senior Development Officer, United Way of Central New Mexico. “We facilitate connections between nonprofits, businesses, community members...relationships that benefit each of the partners in meaningful ways. When VSD asked for recommendations about possible volunteer projects this year, I made several suggestions,” said Jurney. “When they heard about ARCA, they knew it was the right connection for both partners.”

“ARCA is all about relationships,” said Jim Douglas, ARCA Organics Division Director. “We are nurtured by our community partnerships. As a result, we are able to create programs that help bridge funding gaps. ARCA Organics is a prime example. We sell 200 flats of organic wheatgrass each week to Keva Juice and supply lettuce, tomatoes, garlic and blackberries to *Bon Appétit* for use in Intel’s cafes. This summer we began selling produce at the Corrales Growers Market Sunday mornings. The fruits and vegetables grown by individuals with developmental disabilities nurture others. It is a beautiful partnership between ARCA and our community.”

“I have experience with folks with physical disabilities, but limited experience with people with developmental disabilities,” said a VSD Volunteer. “I’ve had a physical disability for over 20 years and I know how the general population can choose to look the other way and not deal with their own awkwardness. For this reason alone I make sure I *don’t* look the other way and *do* make myself

comfortable around *all* disabilities. I look forward to what I can contribute to ARCA and will follow the procedures on the website to become a volunteer."

"We are so impressed by the work ethic and gentle spirit of our Victoria's Secret volunteers," said Michele Cody, ARCA Foundation Development Director. "In the first few hours they were on-site at our greenhouses they completed a full week's worth of weeding, landscaping, planting and harvesting. No task was too big or too small...and everywhere you looked the smiles were plentiful. These folks are quickly becoming part of our ARCA family and we look forward to creating exciting opportunities together for a long time."

"I look forward to this time of year," said Ed Rivera, President and CEO of United Way of Central New Mexico. "The community campaign is about to kick into full swing and the energy surrounding it is contagious. People from across industry and economic sectors come together to learn about, teach and strengthen one another. United Way, Victoria's Secret Direct and ARCA working together to overcome challenges is an example of this powerful circle of inspiration."

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ARCA is a nonprofit organization founded in 1957 by a group of Albuquerque families who had children with developmental disabilities. The mission of ARCA has remained consistent for 51 years: opening doors for people with developmental disabilities to be valued members of our community. For more

information, please call Michele Cody at 505-332-6803 or visit our web site at www.ARCAOpeningDoors.org.