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For Immediate Release

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Walter Barrientos Joins North Star Fund Staff as Program Officer

New York, NY – January 31, 2011 – North Star Fund is pleased to announce the appointment of Walter Barrientos as our new Program Officer. Walter will be responsible for implementing our new grantmaking guidelines (northstarfund.org/NewGrants), coordinating our technical assistance and training programs, and collecting and publicizing the stories and victories of our grantees.

Walter received his bachelor's degree from Baruch College, and is currently completing the College's Masters in Public Administration program.

Walter comes to North Star Fund with a deep personal involvement in the grassroots activism and community organizing work that the foundation supports. Born in Guatemala, Walter came to the U.S. at the age of 11, settling with his parents and attending school on Long Island.

According to Walter, "My parents migrated with the conviction that in the United States, we could work hard as a family and as children, we would be able to get a good education and reach our full potential. My parents worked long hours in construction and housekeeping while my sister and I studied. In our free time we made food to sell and collected bottles. But even though I was among the top students in my class, my guidance counselor discouraged me from applying to college because I was an undocumented immigrant. But I persevered."

Walter's experience at school motivated him to become a founding board member of the United We Dream Network, a national network of groups working to pass the DREAM Act. Walter has also worked with the New York State Leadership Council, the New York Immigration Coalition, Latin American Integration Center (now merged with Make the Road New York), and Cabrini Immigrant Services.

Walter adds, "When I started college, like most undocumented immigrant youth, I thought I was the only undocumented student. Then I was invited to a public demonstration in support of the DREAM Act. There, I discovered dozens of other undocumented students like myself. The growth and success that the immigrant youth movement has experienced is a testament to the power of grassroots organizations to bring their issues to the forefront of social policy debates.

"North Star supports grassroots community activism and organizing across communities and issues that affects me personally. I could not think of a better place to join with others to help promote a progressive vision for all communities in New York."

About North Star Fund

New Yorkers deserve a city guided by a vision of peace, economic justice and equality; a city defined by strong communities, ample opportunity, and a just and fair government. Since 1979, North Star Fund has brought together New Yorkers from all backgrounds to work towards this vision by investing in grassroots community activists who make change happen.