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***THE BARRIO MAKING A DIFFERENCE CHALLENGE AIMS TO  
SAVE KIDS FROM DRUGS, GANGS AND VIOLENCE***

*Author challenges individuals and businesses to put empowering book  
into the hands of those who need inspiration most*

**AURORA, Ill. (Oct. 1, 2008)** – According to ABC News, an estimated 2,500 students drop out of high schools across the nation on a daily basis. The Child Trends Databank reported that in 2005 Hispanics accounted for 41 percent of all high school dropouts. How does society stop this escalating and defeating trend? How can someone make a commitment, and a difference, to reverse this alarming reality?

**Author Launches *The Barrio Making a Difference Challenge: A Grassroots Movement***

Princeton University professors, ghetto and barrio middle and high school teachers, congressmen, and mayors alike are standing behind the message in “From the Barrio to the Board Room,” an empowering memoir by Robert Renteria, as told to Corey Blake. The book’s message has become the driving force behind *The Barrio Making A Difference Challenge: A Grassroots Movement* ([www.thebarriochallenge.com](http://www.thebarriochallenge.com)). Renteria and his supporters are striving to put this book and its message in the hands of those who need its inspiration the most.

**The Challenge Has Begun**

First, Renteria challenged himself. To date, he has donated more than 1,500 copies of the book to those who are impassioned by his story but had no funds to purchase the book, including officials from schools, human services agencies, and organizations that aid victims of domestic violence and troubled youth.

“Kids are literally stealing copies of the book from one another because they want them so desperately,” said Renteria. “Imagine, kids actually wanting to read a book without being told to! I challenge everyone who has the financial means to donate funds or books and get them in the hands of these kids.”

Renteria then connected with the Oberweis Foundation in Illinois. President Jim Oberweis had read the book and recognized its value as an inspiration to young people facing tough choices. The Oberweis Foundation donated the funds to purchase 1,000 copies of the book for Aurora school students.

Business owners have stepped to the plate as well. Owner of Eastern Funding (New York City) Michael Fanger purchased 182 copies of the book to give to his clients and employees. For him, the book's story about chasing the American dream is like that of his clients, as they do the same when they approach his company for financial assistance.

Alex Harris, owner of Professional Laundry Systems, purchased 125 copies of the book and donated them to Commack High School in Commack, New York.

“There aren't enough copies getting into the hands of those who can benefit from the message that, with hard work and determination, anything is possible,” said Renteria, who knows first hand the potential consequences of living a life riddled with gang violence and drugs. Despite sleeping in a dresser drawer in a one-room, bachelor apartment in East L.A as an infant and growing up in the barrio, today Renteria is the successful co-founder and executive vice president of WashPro USA.

### **How to Take the Challenge**

Renteria is challenging business owners and philanthropists to take *The Barrio Making a Difference Challenge* by making a restricted gift to the school or charity of choice, to allow them to then purchase copies of “From the Barrio to the Board Room.” The tax-deductible donation will demonstrate a desire to support the youth of this country and help others reach the American Dream.

To receive a complete package regarding the Challenge or to learn more about how you can be a catalyst for positive change, contact Renteria at 312.933.5619 or [robert@fromthebarrio.com](mailto:robert@fromthebarrio.com) or Blake at 224.475.0392 or [corey@writersoftheroundtable.com](mailto:corey@writersoftheroundtable.com). You can also visit [www.thebarriochallenge.com](http://www.thebarriochallenge.com) to download *The Making a Difference Challenge* PDF.

To learn more about Renteria, his story and his book, visit [www.fromthebarrio.com](http://www.fromthebarrio.com). For press materials, visit [www.robertrenteria.presskit247.com](http://www.robertrenteria.presskit247.com).

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