

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Sue Publicover
sue@writersoftheroundtable.com
207.752.4802

Kim Jackson
kim@writersoftheroundtable.com
802.345.9730



**OBERWEIS FOUNDATION DONATES 1,000 COPIES OF
EMPOWERING MEMOIR TO UNDERFUNDED SCHOOLS**
*Illinois foundation accepts author Robert Renteria's
nationwide challenge to break the cycle of violence*

AURORA, Ill. (Sept. 11, 2008) – Thunderous applause and cheers from students, teachers and parents at the East Aurora High School's 12th Annual March Against Violence greeted today's announcement that the Oberweis Foundation is donating the funds for the school district to purchase 1,000 copies of the highly sought after book, "From the Barrio to the Board Room." The book's author, Robert Renteria, who served as Grand Marshal of the March, made the announcement himself. The funds are being provided to the Aurora East Educational Foundation in order to purchase the books, which will then be given to students in the East Aurora School District.

"I am so grateful to Jim Oberweis for making this generous gift possible from the Oberweis Foundation," said a passionate Renteria, who is co-founder and executive vice president of WashPro USA, a Westchester, Illinois-based business. "My hope is to put this book into the hands of every student in the entire school district and beyond, so that each child can learn that anything is possible with hard work and determination. Thanks to the Oberweis Foundation, we are one step closer to reaching this goal, and the ones who will benefit are the kids."

Jim Oberweis, president of the Oberweis Foundation, a private family foundation, shares a common conviction with Renteria. Both Renteria and the Oberweis family believe that hard work, strong ethics, refusing to compromise to get what you want and doing it legally is the key. Education is essential to that success.

"After attending the book launch, I reached out to Robert and asked how I could help," said Oberweis. "When I read Robert's book, I identified strongly with his message of hard work and perseverance in achieving success. Our family's gift is just the first step in breaking the cycle of violence and poverty. Our children need to hear the message of this book so that they have the tools to make the right choices. We are honored to be part of this amazing movement, and we challenge others to join us and do whatever they can to continue the momentum."

The Oberweis Foundation has a strong history in supporting area not-for-profits. Last fall, the Oberweis family made the lead gift to Hesed House's capital campaign, the same organization that Renteria chose to be the beneficiary of his book launch event. Today's donation represents the lead gift to what Renteria and Co-author and Publisher Corey Blake are calling *The Making a Difference Movement*, the grass-roots efforts to spread the message of the book throughout the world. "Supporting *The Making a Difference Movement* demonstrates our family's strong commitment to giving back to our community," said Oberweis. "The East Aurora School District allowed me to fulfill my dream as an educator by hiring me right out of college as a math & science teacher at Waldo Middle School. I guess you could say I've come full circle."

"Renteria's book is truly inspirational," said Trish Oberweis, Ph.D. and associate professor at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Dept. of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies, and Jim's daughter. "The book provides a clear, honest and personal example that can motivate young people to take the bull by the horns. Renteria's story provides a call to action for those who live on the edges — whose success depends more than anything else upon their willingness to work hard, to accept challenges, to do the seemingly impossible, and to never, ever give up."

"From the Barrio to the Board Room" was published this year by Writers of the Round Table Press and the book has already inspired many EAHS students who have read and recommended it. Renteria himself slept in a dresser drawer as an infant in a one-room, bachelor apartment in East L.A. Although living in the midst of gang violence where drugs were common, Renteria escaped the fate that befell many of his friends. His work in the community, including his involvement with the Drug and Alcohol Reduction Grant, is changing lives. He also serves on the board of directors for the Aurora Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and continues to reach out as a motivational speaker to organizations like Aunt Martha's, Mutual Ground, student groups, and businesses.

"East Aurora School District 131 is grateful to Mr. Renteria for partnering with the Oberweis Foundation for this unprecedented donation to benefit East Aurora students," said Clayton Muhammad, East Aurora director of community relations. "Our vision is to provide the framework for our children to make choices for excellence. 'From the Barrio to the Board Room' is a story that personifies excellence and demonstrates how critical it is for us to make positive choices in order to be successful. Thanks to Mr. Renteria and the Oberweis Foundation, our children will have an inspirational key to open new doors to limitless possibilities."

The Aurora East Educational Foundation is a not-for-profit organization established to attract private donations of funds and services for the purpose of enriching educational programs and providing opportunities not otherwise available through traditional revenue sources. The foundation will use this donation to distribute "From the Barrio to the Board Room" to students throughout the district.

For individuals or organizations wishing to purchase the book or to make a donation to help stop the cycle of drugs and violence and break the cycle of poverty, more information is available by calling 224.475.0392 or at www.fromthebarrio.com.

For interviews with Renteria or to request a review copy of the book, contact Sue Publicover, sue@writersoftheroundtable.com, 207.752.4802 or Kim Jackson, kim@writersoftheroundtable.com, 802.345.9730.

###