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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southwest Detroit youth left without rides to local after-school program

Detroit, November 17, 2014 – Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC) suffered the tragic loss of our 50-passenger bus on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 17 after it unexpectedly burst into flames.

Fortunately, nobody was injured in the incident; however, without access to transportation, many of DHDC's program participants cannot attend their daily programs. DHDC's Youth Department provides services to Southwest Detroit's youth who are in great need of support and mentorship. The program provides a safe place for kids to learn and grow into productive citizens. We use hip-hop and media arts as tools to captivate the youth, and later transition to engagement through STEM activities, as well as gang and/or violence prevention.

The program lessens barriers for youth in Southwest Detroit neighborhoods through education assistance and the provision of youth development services. The program also provides a warm dinner and a ride from school to the program and then home at no cost to the participant or their family. DHDC purchased the 1998 vehicle equipped with a handicap lift, 15 in. screen televisions, a DVD player, and a decent sound system. A local artist, Brian Glass, donated a custom paint job that decorated the bus with urban flair. DHDC youth truly felt at home in this bus that represented safety, security, and their interests.

This bus was essential to DHDC's youth and family-based programs. DHDC serves as a second home for many of the youth, and is one of the few safe places where they do not have to worry about drugs, gangs, or violence. Youth Department Director Lex Zavala says, "Every day, we battle the influence that the streets have on our youth, and every day without transportation is another day that the streets have a chance to influence our participants." DHDC's after-school program has been temporarily suspended until new transportation has been secured for participants, leaving many local youth without safe, organized activities after school.

DHDC is currently accepting donations to cover the cost of upgrading an older bus, but we hope to eventually purchase a new bus for program-based transportation. To make a monetary donation, or if you are aware of any leads regarding a 50-passenger vehicle, please contact Lex Zavala at (313) 967-4880.

About Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation

Founded in 1997 by Angela Reyes, DHDC provides life changing services to Southwest Detroit youth and their families. Growing to service almost 7,000 individuals annually, DHDC remains committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment that promotes family, education, and healthy lifestyles. Services include Youth Leadership, Urban Arts, Padres Unidos, ESL & GED classes, tattoo removal and gang prevention.

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