



**THE Carson J Spencer
FOUNDATION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WORKING MINDS AWARD GIVEN TO TU CASA

Local non-profit, Tu Casa, Inc., receives recognition as being a mentally-healthy workplace
by the Carson J Spencer Foundation

Denver, Colo. - August 12, 2011. In a time when many workplaces are strained and employees stress, Tu Casa, Inc. has focused on being a mentally healthy workplace. The organization serves victims and families affected by domestic violence, sexual assault/abuse, stalking, elder abuse and hate crimes throughout the 6 rural counties of the San Luis Valley, Colorado. Knowing the staff of counselors, advocates and outreach professionals constantly faces stressful, emotive situations where they provide support to adults and children in crisis, Tu Casa focuses on building policies and procedures that promote resiliency and well-being. For their outstanding work in promoting mental health, Tu Casa will be recognized with a Working Minds Award at the Carson J Spencer Foundation's Shining Lights of Hope Gala on the evening of August 28th at Infinity Park in Glendale, Colorado.

Tu Casa has embedded certain practices in order to practice healthy relationship behaviors in the community, to encourage self-care, and to alleviate a portion of work-related stress. These practices include financial support to employees who decide to seek outside mental health/counseling services, internal access to Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, regular debriefing sessions and individual meetings between staff members and their supervisor to address concerns and feelings.

Since the start of these internal initiatives in the fall of 2009, Tu Casa has managed to retain 90% of its employees. Despite attempts by outside agencies to recruit the staff members of Tu Casa, the employees decide to support the mission of the organization, thus remaining loyal and supportive.

"We celebrate each individual's strengths and share in the success of one another," said Executive Director, Ashley Lopes. "We feel it is important to commemorate everyone's achievements."

Tu Casa, Inc. was awarded 2nd place in the Carson J Spencer Foundation's Working Minds Contest. In order to win, contestants needed to be workplaces based in Colorado that demonstrated measurable success by implementing innovative and effective mental health policies and procedures.

"Mental health isn't something many workplaces consider when thinking about the health of their employees, and yet, distress impacts productivity, retention and morale significantly," said Sally Spencer-Thomas, CEO and Co-Founder of the Carson J Spencer Foundation. "We are delighted to honor workplaces in Colorado that take proactive steps to help promote mental health."

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About Tu Casa

Established in 1979, Tu Casa has served thousands of women and children in securing their right to be safe. The mission of Tu Casa is to cultivate healthy, violence-free relationships by providing crisis intervention and advocacy for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence as well as educating the community and empowering individuals and families with ongoing counseling, particularly within the San Luis Valley.

About the Carson J Spencer Foundation: Sustaining a Passion for Life

The Carson J Spencer Foundation (www.CarsonJSpencer.org) is a Colorado nonprofit, established in 2005. We envision a world where leaders and communities are committed to sustaining a passion for life. We sustain a passion for life by:

- Delivering innovative and effective suicide prevention programs for working-aged people
- Coaching young leaders to develop social enterprises for mental health promotion and suicide prevention
- Supporting people bereaved by suicide