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## **SALSA Students to Run Bank of America Chicago Marathon**

August 22, 2011

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Five Illinois Wesleyan students will run the Bank of America Chicago Marathon on Sunday, October 9 in order to raise money for the charity Casa de los Angeles.

Janette Abbasi and David Dimas of Chicago, Melissa Ramirez of Los Angeles, Vanessa Rodriguez of Round Lake Beach, Ill. and Jairo Rosales of Melrose Park, Ill., all class of 2014, are members of Illinois Wesleyan's Spanish and Latino Student Association (SALSA), a campus organization dedicated to promoting and celebrating Latin American culture, heritage and diversity. The students chose to run with Casa de los Angeles, a daycare, community center, transitional housing and medical clinic program in the city of San Miguel de Allende, because of its specific focus on the Latino community.

According to Kevin O'Donnell, coordinator for the Marathon's Team Casa, Casa de los Angeles is one of only two or three Marathon charities working in Mexico. "Many of our volunteers are college students who come to Mexico for a winter, spring or summer break and take advantage of the experience as a language or cultural immersion," he said. "I think one of the great benefits students glean from involvement with Casa particularly is insight into a meaningful response to poverty."

The 2011 Bank of America Chicago Marathon Charity Program boasts affiliation with more than a hundred charities, with all fundraising directly supporting each charity's initiatives. Abbasi, Dimas, Ramirez, Rodriguez and Rosales have committed to raising \$750 apiece for their cause, which will include both individual and group fundraising.

"We are grateful that the students involved with SALSA sought us out to sign up and run with Team Casa," said O'Donnell.

For more information about Illinois Wesleyan SALSA's involvement with Casa de los Angeles and the Chicago Marathon, visit <http://marathon.casadelosangeles.org/runners/iwu-salsa>.

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