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National Safe Place and Southwest Airlines Announce 2011 *HEROES for Youth* Award Recipient

(November 8, 2011) Louisville, Ky. – National Safe Place and Southwest Airlines announce Harry Wilson, Senior Fellow at ICF International, as the 2011 *HEROES for Youth* award recipient. Southwest Airlines sponsors this annual award, established by National Safe Place, to recognize individuals who have made extraordinary contributions nationally to services provided to at-risk youth.

“Southwest Airlines is honored to sponsor the *HEROES for Youth* award, and we salute and recognize the work of Harry Wilson as noble and inspiring,” said Linda Rutherford, Southwest’s Vice President for Communication and Strategic Outreach. “Creating a safety net for our youth is our collective communities’ most important task. They are our future.”

With more than 30 years of experience serving youth and communities, Wilson has pioneered new and innovative programs to better serve at-risk youth. As associate commissioner of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), he led and participated in important initiatives of the past decade, including the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program, National Youth Summit, Runaway and Homeless Youth program, First Lady’s Helping America’s Youth Initiative and others.

Prior to his role at the FYSB, Wilson worked as a consultant to HHS in federal and youth grant positions, served as dean of students for the Montcalm School, was the assistant director of Starr Commonwealth Schools and worked as a training consultant for the Michigan Association of Children’s Alliances in Lansing.

Wilson has received many awards for his work, including a Juvenile Justice Award for Service to Children and Families and a National Youth Impact Award.

“Mr. Wilson is a dedicated youth advocate and his history in working to promote the rights and services of young people is outstanding,” said Laurie Jackson, National Safe Place Executive Director. “We are truly honored to recognize him as this year’s Hero for Youth.”

National Safe Place based the *HEROES for Youth* award on the following criteria:

- H** Hear the voices of at-risk youth
- E** Engage in the discussion
- R** Respond to the call
- O** Observe the need for change and take action
- E** Educate and encourage key stakeholders to make a positive difference
- S** Significantly change the lives of at-risk youth for the better

About National Safe Place

Safe Places provide access to immediate help and safety for all young people in crisis. A public-private network of more than 19,000 sites across the country extends the doors of local youth shelters by displaying the Safe Place sign. Business partners and community locations that appeal to youth – such as fast food restaurants, convenience stores, fire stations, public buses and libraries – connect kids looking for help with the youth service agency. The Safe Place program was created by the YMCA of Greater Louisville in 1983. For additional information, visit www.nationalsafeplace.org.

About Southwest Airlines

Southwest Airlines' Share the Spirit program embodies the culture of positive impact in the communities it serves – demonstrated through Southwest's charitable giving, Employee volunteerism, and community relations programs. Southwest Airlines is one of the most honored airlines in the world, consistently appearing on the FORTUNE Magazine's "Most Admired Companies" list. After 38 years of service, Southwest Airlines, the nation's leading low-fare carrier, continues to stand above other airlines – offering a reliable product with exemplary Customer Service. Southwest Airlines (NYSE: LUV) currently serves 72 cities in 37 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest currently operates more than 3,400 flights a day and has more than 35,000 Employees systemwide who work hard each and every day to provide excellent Customer service and make a difference in the community. To learn more about Southwest's community involvement, visit www.southwest.com/cares.

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