



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 12, 2010

Contacts:

Brenda Goldsmith, Executive Director, El Rio Health Center Foundation, Cell 520-250-6516 or brendag@elrio.org

Jill Rodriguez, Development Coordinator, El Rio Health Center Foundation Cell 520-870-7148 or jillr@elrio.org

Thousands in Sunnyside and the surrounding area expected to benefit from El Rio Health Center Foundation “gala” event

40th Anniversary “Raise the Pepper!” gala challenges nationwide charity trends for special event attendance with a sold out crowd of 930!

TUCSON – The philanthropic community is sending a strong statement as El Rio’s 40th anniversary dinner heads into Thursday night with a sold out crowd of 930 attending and a waiting list to get into the event. The gala will take place Thursday, October 14th from 6:00-8:30 pm in the grand ballroom at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa. **“Our community has really responded to El Rio’s call to action to help all of our community members to have access to quality medical care. Our Foundation Board, volunteers and foundation staff are so excited to be raising critical funding to support the purchase of a GE X-Ray machine for the new 26,000 square foot El Pueblo Clinic whose grand opening is December 2, 2010 on the grounds of the El Pueblo Neighborhood Center.”** The new clinic can serve 6,900 more people than the current 6,000 square foot clinic site and will offer radiology, lab and a pharmacy in addition to medical care.

In January the El Rio Health Center Foundation Board decided to ignore the research that said charity event attendance was down as was charitable giving, instead Kirk Saunders, Board President and Camerone Parker, the Event Chair asked their fellow Board members to approve a stretch goal of a 25% increase in revenue (from \$300,000 to \$400,000) and attendance over last year’s event. **“Many people in the community told us that they thought we would never make our goal in this economy. Our Board and staff responded we have to, there are more people who need our help with health care now than ever before”, said Kirk Saunders, Board President, El Rio Health Center Foundation.** In addition to finding new and more sponsors El Rio also had to find a new Title and Presenting Sponsor for the event. They were thrilled with the first solicitations they made in January when Garry Brav, President of BFL Construction agreed to become the new Title Sponsor and Lisa Lovallo from Cox Communication said “yes” to becoming the Presenting Sponsor.

Then the momentum kept growing when three committed Tucson families stepped forward with a combined gifts totaling \$115,000 in challenge funding to be placed on the floor at the gala. Last year there was \$20,000 from the Click Family Foundation on the floor to be matched. The amount this year is almost six times greater. Thursday’s guests will be asked to raise their paddle pledging gifts ranging from \$40 to \$25,000 to help meet the \$115,000 challenge. The Board of Directors also welcomes all community members to join them by making a gift on-line at www.elriofoundation.org. All donors who gift \$1,000 or more will have their company and/or name displayed on a plaque at the new clinic site. El Rio Foundation is a qualifying tax credit organization for the “working poor tax credit” (\$200 per single, \$400 per couple), which is different then the school tax credit. We want people in our community to know they can do both.

El Rio is proud of the fact that 100% of every gift made at the event will go directly to new radiology equipment and services for children. One of the reasons El Rio Health Center Foundation can make this promise

is because of the number of in-kind donors and vendors who completely gifted their talents and goods or offered them at a very deep discount. Over \$40,000 in donated goods and services has been received for the October 14th celebration.

Now in its 40th year, El Rio Community Health Center is the largest provider in Pima County of medical and dental services to uninsured and Medicaid populations with over 17 patient sites in the Tucson area serving over 74,000 patients annually. The El Rio Health Center Foundation was created in 2001 to fund new programs, enhance existing programs and help with capital needs at El Rio Community Health Center. The El Rio Foundation has now raised over \$8 million in support of the health center. For more information visit www.elrio.org and www.elriofoundation.org

Jill Rodriguez

Development Coordinator/Corporate Media Relations

El Rio Health Center Foundation

Cell: 520-870-7148

www.elriofoundation.org – www.elrio.org

"Celebrating 40 Years of Providing Quality Medical and Dental Care"