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**Application for Appointment to a  
City of Minneapolis Board, Commission, Committee or Task Force**

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Minnesota Government Data Practices Act**

<b>Title of the Board, Commission, Committee or Task Force this application is for</b>
Latino Advisory Committee

Name: Karen Jiménez Smith	Ward: 12th
Signature: <i>KJ Smith</i>	Date: 2/19/09

Occupation: Bilingual Social Worker	Employer: Catholic Charities
Employer's Address: 1276 University W, St. Paul, MN 55104	

<p>Describe your background related to any required or desirable qualification listed in the Notice. Include applicable experience with civic, professional or volunteer organizations and other city boards or commissions. List any awards or special recognition.</p> <p>I have worked with the Latino population in the U.S. and in Latin America since 2001. My family is from Colombia, S.A. and I have always been drawn to working with the Latino population due to the various struggles families face in the U.S. This motivation stems from personal and professional experiences I have had as a Latina and in working in Latino communities.</p> <p>My experiences include volunteering in Guatemala through an NGO called Common Hope, as a social worker from 2001-2003. My time there was incredibly influential in my decision in becoming a social worker. I worked with children and adults who faced problems with alcoholism, domestic abuse, etc., and it completely motivated me to return to the U.S. to work on a Masters at St. Thomas/St. Kate's in Clinical Social Work. I graduated from the program in May of 2007.</p> <p>During that time, I worked for CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio) in Minneapolis, and served Latin American adolescents who were pregnant and in need social services. When I completed graduate school I started my work with Catholic Charities as a Bilingual Social Worker in a prenatal clinic. I work with pregnant women and their families from all different backgrounds, and a significant percentage are from Latin America. My work includes helping women obtain healthcare, providing education for healthy pregnancies, connecting them to different resources in the community. I also work with clients who deal with mental health issues, chemical abuse, and domestic abuse.</p>
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Other experiences include working with Habitat for Humanity (my husband is a director for an Americorps program through Habitat in Minneapolis), nationally and internationally. We have helped build houses in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Mexico. My experiences with Habitat for Humanity have expanded my views on housing and stability in Minnesota, and in developing countries, and it has taught me a great deal about community building in general.

In addition, my husband and I also sponsor a student in Guatemala through Common Hope. We believe that making contributions towards the education of a young high school student will hopefully make a difference in her life. Through letters and photos we remain connected and learn about our sponsored child's life and what is happening in her country.

Recently, I was invited through my employer, Catholic Charities, to participate in a program called Developing Leaders Within. It is a professional and personal development program that will enhance my skills as a leader in my current position. This program has encouraged me to take on a role as a leader in the community as well. I am learning about implementing changes, and how to be influential in my career and in my personal life. I will receive a certification for completing this program in June of 2009.

I am very excited about the possibility of becoming a Latino Advisory Committee member. I am very passionate about my work with the Latino population and I am always curious to learn about what the current challenges are in the community. Learning about healthcare, immigration, housing, etc., is what I do continuously, and I enjoy being able to communicate any information to those who do not have access to resources due to various barriers. I grew up in a home where this was the case, and I know the importance of being able to trust someone with the right information. I want to continue to be that person and I think being on this committee will allow me to do just that.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.



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