

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**YOUNG PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY
OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD
ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT**

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(Springfield, March 17, 2008) **Elizabeth Cardona**, Director of Governor Patrick's Western Massachusetts office in Springfield, was named the first ever recipient of the **Young Professional Society of Greater Springfield's Excellence In Leadership Award**. Ms. Cardona will receive the award at the annual **Leadership Institute graduation** celebration on Monday evening, **April 14, 2008 at The Colony Club in Springfield**.

Leadership Institute, since 1982, a partnership between the *Affiliated Chamber of Commerce of Greater Springfield* and *Western New England College*, was originally established by the Springfield Chamber thirty years ago to teach mid and upper level managers the crucial thinking and problem solving skills needed to enable them to be effective leaders in service to the community. **YPS**, the brainchild of a handful of past Leadership Institute graduates who, recognizing the value of this important program, decided to honor the work of the Chamber and Western New England College in this long-standing local tradition. To this end, the **Young Professional Society Excellence In Leadership Award** was created **to recognize that prior Leadership Institute alumnus who has distinguished his/herself through community involvement, civic leadership, and professional excellence**.

Chairing the selection committee, YPS board member *Jeff Fialky, Esq. of Bacon & Wilson. P.C.* enthusiastically endorsed the selection. "On behalf of YPS, we are thrilled to be able to present this award to Elizabeth Cardona. When you look at how many philanthropic and community groups to which she actively contributes, it is truly impressive. There can be no question that Elizabeth continues to demonstrate a breadth of community involvement and professional excellence that sets her apart as a true leader in the Pioneer Valley."

Ms Cardona's resume is filled with choices promoting community involvement. Most recently as English Language Learning (ELL) Program Education Specialist for Documentation Compliance Data, Parent & Community Involvement for the Springfield Public Schools. In 2005, she participated in the city of Springfield Policing Program sponsored by the Springfield Police Department where she received an insight into Public Safety. In 2006 Ms. Cardona was elected as a delegate to the Massachusetts Democratic Convention. In 2006, she participated in the Commonwealth Seminar Leadership Training. Seeking greater leadership development, Cardona became a 2007 graduate of Leadership Institute. More recently, Ms. Cardona was appointed by Mayor Dominic Sarno, to serve on his Education Transition Committee. She also serves on the boards of the Springfield Cultural Council, is the Regional Chair for *¿Oíste?* The Massachusetts Latino Political Organization, and writes a monthly Latino-Perspective column in the African-American Point of View Community Newspaper.

YPS Selection Committee members include Mr. Fialky, Michael Weber, of Minuteman Press in Enfield, CT and YPS board member, Matthew Andrews of Best Buddies of Western Massachusetts, Erik Skar of MassMutual Financial Group, and Kathleen Plante, consultant and YPS co-founder.

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