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**Human Rights Commission and Legislature  
Honor Hispanic-Americans for Outstanding Service**

Monticello, NY – The United States celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15. Approved by President Lyndon Johnson, and later expanded by President Ronald Reagan to a full month, the month is set aside to celebrate the customs, traditions, and successes of United States citizens with Hispanic ethnicities. Hispanic-Americans such as writer Julia Alvarez, actor Edward James Olmos, musician Gloria Estefan, activist Cesar Chavez, and many more have used their success to serve as positive role models.

During this celebratory month, the Sullivan County Human Rights Commission recognized local Hispanic-Americans/Latinos who selflessly demonstrate, through their careers and daily lives, the importance of giving back to the residents of Sullivan County.

On October 20, the Human Rights Commission and the Sullivan County Legislature lauded Ariel Escobar (NYSDOCCS), Lorraine Lopez-Janove (Orange, Sullivan, Ulster Community Colleges), and Yempha Smith (BOCES) as outstanding citizens of the County.

“The positive contributions made by these individuals to our diverse community embodies the spirit and responsibility of citizenry,” said Ari-Mir Pontier, Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission. “They are role models for all ages, all backgrounds, all ethnicities, and they make us proud.”

“It is citizens like these who make a difference every day in and around Sullivan County,” added Legislature Chairman Luis Alvarez. “As a proud Hispanic-American myself, I am honored to represent them in County government, and on behalf of the entire Legislature, I say, ‘Thank you!’”

**CAPTION: The Sullivan County Legislature and Human Rights Commission honored three local Hispanic-Americans in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month. From the left are Legislature Chairman Luis Alvarez, Deputy County Manager Dan Depew, legislators Mark McCarthy, Ira Steingart and Joe Perrello, honoree Ariel Escobar, Legislator Alan Sorensen, honoree Yempha Smith, honoree Lorraine Lopez-Janove, legislators Scott Samuelson and Terri Ward, County Manager Josh Potossek, Legislature Vice Chair Nadia Rajsz and Human Rights Commission Executive Director Ari Mir-Pontier.**