



**Franciscan Friars  
Holy Name Province  
Communications Office**  
129 West 31<sup>st</sup> St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10001- 3403  
646-473-0265 ext. 321

**For Immediate Release**

CONTACT: Jocelyn Thomas, director of communications  
[jthomas@HNP.org](mailto:jthomas@HNP.org)

**SIENA COLLEGE HONORS RALPH PEREZ, CEO OF NYC SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY, AT GRADUATION**

LOUDONVILLE, N.Y. — May 18, 2011 — Siena College, a Franciscan-sponsored college, honored Ralph F. Perez, executive director of a New York City social services agency, with a doctor of humane letters degree at its May 15 commencement ceremony.

Perez is the executive director and chief executive officer of Create, Inc., a not-for-profit, multi-service organization in Harlem, a role in which he has served since 1992. Under his leadership, Create has grown to serve more than 1,200 people annually through chemical dependency treatment programs, transitional housing and support services for homeless young adults, permanent housing for homeless mothers, a day center for senior citizens, and emergency food services for the hungry.

It is for this life of service to the poor in the Franciscan tradition that Siena College recognized Perez. Also honored were Diane Ravitch, research professor of education at New York University, and Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, Md.

Create was founded by the Rev. Benedict Taylor, OFM, a member of Holy Name Province, the Franciscan community that has sponsored Siena College since its establishment in 1937. Several Holy Name priests and brothers, including the Rev. Mychal Judge, OFM, the FDNY chaplain who died on Sept. 11 at the World Trade Center, have served on Create's board of directors over the years. The province provides financial support to Create, which shares with the Franciscans a strong commitment to helping those in need in New York City. In 1998, Perez was affiliated as a member of Holy Name Province.

"I am grateful that the Siena board of trustees, Fr. Kevin Mullen, OFM, president, and the Siena College community recognized me for of a lifetime of service to persons facing poverty, addiction and homelessness," said Perez. "I attribute the success of my labors to the friars who have worked with me and am grateful to all the friars for their financial and spiritual support of the work of Create. I am most blessed and joyous to help rebuild the Lord's house."

Perez first became associated with Holy Name Province in the 1960s as a teenager volunteering for community service with St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan. While in college, he worked with the friars in ministry to the poor in Harlem, as they were establishing Create.

Perez earned a master of science degree from Pratt Institute's School of Architecture in 1993 and a bachelor of arts degree from Bard College through the Higher Education Opportunity Program in 1973.

He received the Puerto Rican Heritage Award in recognition of his achievements and contributions enhancing the self-esteem of the Puerto Rican community.

### **About Holy Name Province**

Holy Name Province is the largest of seven provinces in the United States that belong to the Order of Friars Minor. With ministries in 12 states along the East Coast, its nearly 350 Catholic priests and brothers serve in colleges, parishes, urban ministry centers and a wide variety of social ministries, as well as in overseas missions.

The Order, founded in 1209 by St. Francis of Assisi, commemorated its 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. Today, St. Francis, whose feast day is Oct. 4, remains one of the most widely known saints, revered for his affection for nature and care for creation.

Information about Holy Name Province can be found on [www.hnp.org](http://www.hnp.org). News about the friars and their ministries can be found on the [Facebook page](#) of the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province.

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*Questions and photo requests should be directed to Jocelyn Thomas, HNP director of communications, at 646-473-0265 ext. 321 or 732-829-1513 (mobile) or [jthomas@hnp.org](mailto:jthomas@hnp.org).*

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