



July 10, 2007

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

# Media Advisory

## Gay Mexican youth fights for refugee status in Canada

Leonardo (Leo) Zuniga knows that if he goes home to Mexico, he's likely to face the same type of persecution that led to the execution of over 1,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual people between 1995 and 2005 – data from a recently published book: **Homofobia: Odio, Crimen y Justicia** (Homophobia: Hate, Crime and Justice) by Fernando de Collado.

In a bid to save their friend and ally from that fate, individuals and communities across Toronto, including Member of Parliament Olivia Chow, will come together at “Invisible Struggle” event on July 12 to press the Canadian government to approve Zuniga’s application to stay in Canada on compassionate and humanitarian grounds.

Although Zuniga, 25, has only been in Canada for a short time, he has dedicated himself to making the country a better place for all. From volunteering with organizations that range from the Toronto Youth Cabinet and Supporting Our Youth to the Canadian Council for Refugees and the Youth Action Network, Zuniga has demonstrated that he would be an asset to the nation.

To continue living in Canada, Zuniga requires the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Diane Findley, to grant his application to remain in the country on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. However, time is running out. Zuniga has already been ordered to participate in a call-in interview with the Canada Border Services Agency for the purpose of initiating a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment.

The “Let Leo Stay” campaign is being organized to ensure that the presence of Leonardo Zuniga in Canada is guaranteed by the Canadian government.

**WHAT:** A panel discussion to highlight the plight of gay Mexican refugees

**PHOTO OP:** Olivia Chow signing the Let Leo Stay petition with Leo Zuniga

**WHERE:** 519 Church Street Community Centre Auditorium, 519 Church St.

**WHEN:** Thursday July 12, 2007, 7:30pm

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