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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: CONTACT:**

November 13, 2013 Barbara Holt, 773-651-8372

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Demand for Shelter Continues to Grow for Chicago Homeless

*Institute of Women Today continues fight for families during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, November 16-24*

CHICAGO, IL – November 12, 2013: The Institute for Women Today (IWT) provided 28,576 nights of shelter and 108,500 meals for 365 women, men and children last year. The Englewood-based organization sees a growing demand for its services as it enters its 40th year.

Serving on the front line in the war against homelessness, IWT staff must turn away families in need every day, and the problem is growing. More resources are desperately needed, says Angela Hicks, IWT Executive Director..

“These families would be out on the street, without a roof over their heads or food in their stomachs,” said Hicks. “As our nation prepares to celebrate this year’s Thanksgiving holiday, we are joining the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger in again observing Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and spreading the word about how everyone can help.”

“With the American economy still struggling to recover, we are continuing to see increases in homelessness,” Hicks notes. “Our two shelter programs – Maria located in Englewood and Believe in South Chicago – are daily facing greater demands requiring greater support to meet them.”

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless found an increase of 10% for homeless Chicagoans to 116,042 for 2012-13 compared to 105,338 for the prior school year. The just-released Illinois School Report Card reports a 23% increase in homeless Chicago Public Schools students to 17,248 compared to 14,020 for the prior year.

“Every homeless woman, man and child who receives food and shelter when needed and assistance in transitioning to permanent housing counts,” states Hicks. “The value to each one and to our community is beyond measure.”

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PHOTO CAPTION:

The Institute of Women Today works year-round to end homelessness and hunger for families such as this one residing at each of its two shelters—Maria in Englewood, and Believe in South Chicago.

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