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**“MI BARRIO” GRAPHIC NOVEL TO BATTLE GANG VIOLENCE, SUBSTANCE
ABUSE AND THE SCHOOL DROPUT RATE**

*Writers of the Round Table Press partners with Smarter Comics™ and National Book
Network to bring this story to youth around the world*

CHICAGO, Ill. (August 23, 2010) - From English to Spanish and now to graphic novel, "Mi Barrio," a comic book based on the book, "[From the Barrio to the Board Room](#)" by Robert Renteria as told to [Corey Michael Blake](#), will be released by Writers of the Round Table Press, and distributed by National Book Network (NBN) providing a resource for schools, governments and parents, or anyone who wants to promote education, a sense of pride and accomplishment, and self-esteem within the youth of today's communities.

Publisher Corey Michael Blake and Author Robert Renteria have partnered with Smarter Comics™, a new company owned by Franco Arda based in Silicon Valley that creates comic books by taking popular non-fictions books, summarizing them and illustrating them. "Mi Barrio" is the biographical story in comic form of Renteria's life that has taken him from the ghetto of East LA to successful businessman and now civic leader.

Blake oversaw the creation of the comic book with Creative Director Nathan Brown. Brown collaborated on the illustrations of the 80-page book with artist Shane Clester, who has drawn for leading comic book publisher IDW, Hasbro, Scholastic, Macmillan, and Times of London. (Clester's next book is NYT and Wall Street Journal's Bestselling author Larry Winget's "Shut Up, Stop Whining & Get a Life".)

"The idea of a comic book is a natural for Barrio," said Renteria, who for the past two years has been on an aggressive mission to pull people from the barrios and ghettos by teaching them that anything is possible when one makes the right choices. "Working with Smarter Comics™, we have an opportunity to play a bigger part in changing the landscape of our youth across America."

The comic book developed as a result of a presentation of the From the Barrio to the Classroom curriculum at the Chicago Principal and Administrators Annual Conference in February, where Renteria, Blake and Executive Vice President of the From the Barrio Foundation, Cheryl Maraffio, received numerous requests for a medium to deliver Renteria's story to younger children.

The Smarter Comics™ series offers readers a fun way of reading non-fiction in comic book style, appealing to those children and adults who prefer to read engaging stories in a less traditional manner. Younger children sometimes interact better with a simpler,

more graphic story, and educators can still teach the fundamentals of the story with a comic book.

"Mi Barrio" will be available in English and Spanish and in print through NBN and in digital formats through SmarterComics.

To learn more about "Mi Barrio", [From The Barrio Foundation](#), [the book](#) and its [curriculum](#) or to read more about Renteria's story, please visit www.fromthebarrio.com or contact [Corey Michael Blake](#) at 224.475.0392.

About Writers of the Round Table Press, Inc.

Writers of the Round Table Press is the publishing division of book packager Writers of the Round Table Inc., led by Corey Michael Blake. Visit www.roundtablepress.com and www.roundtablecompanies.com.

About National Book Network

National Book Network provides sales, marketing and distribution for North American and overseas publishers. <http://www.nbnbooks.com>

About SmarterComics™

Based in Silicon Valley, SmarterComics™ specializes in taking popular non-fiction books and transforming them into a comic book format that is entertaining, short, and informative to read. www.smartercomics.com.

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