

PRESS RELEASE – MAY 7, 2010

On Thursday, May 13, 2010, from 11:30 am-12:30 pm, author of *The Red Umbrella*, Christina Gonzalez, will speak to Hebrew Academy Charlotte Rohr Middle School students about the writing process, editing, and publishing, in the school's Media and Publishing Center. She will also sign books for the students. The Hebrew Academy Media Center serves as more than a place to read and research, thanks to a generous grant from the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, it is also a Publishing Center. Students complete their editing and writing processes in the Publishing Center and then with the help of Laurie Mitrani, the Media Center Specialist for grades K-8, students ready and submit their writing for publication and/or contest entry. Guest speakers from the writing and illustrating world are a key feature of the Hebrew Academy Publishing Center program. The Hebrew Academy is pleased to host Mrs. Gonzalez as one of these featured speakers.

The Red Umbrella is Christina Gonzalez's first novel. Educated to be a lawyer, Christina felt a pull to return to her Cuban roots where pastelitos and black beans and rice were a mainstay but chicken fried steak and the cuisine of her Southern hometown were also greatly appreciated. Hanging out with friends, riding bikes and climbing trees filled her days and Spanish speaking grandparents and parents enlivened each evening. Christina says she truly had the best of both worlds. An avid writer as a child, Christina set writing aside when she moved to Miami as a teenager where she later pursued accounting and law. After the birth of her two sons she naturally reconnected with her cultural and familial roots and was once again drawn to her Southern and Cuban upbringing and writing which were the inspiration for *The Red Umbrella*.

The Red Umbrella is set in 1961, two years after the Communist revolution wherein Lucía Álvarez still leads a carefree life, dreaming of parties and her first crush. But when the soldiers come to her sleepy Cuban town, everything begins to change. Freedoms are stripped away. Neighbors disappear. Her friends feel like strangers. And her family is being watched. As the revolution's impact becomes more oppressive, Lucía's parents make the heart-wrenching decision to send her and her little brother to the U.S. -- on their own. Suddenly plunked down in Nebraska with well-meaning strangers, Lucía struggles to adapt to a new country, a new language, a new way of life. But what of her old life? Will she ever see her home or her parents again? And if she does, will she still be the same girl?

Reviewers are saying: "An exceptional historical novel" – *Kirkus Review*, "Moving and inspiring debut novel" – *Shelf Awareness*, "A Top Ten Pick for the Summer Indie Next List!" – *Indie Bound*

For more details and information about this event please contact Laurie Mitrani at (305) 532-6421 ext. 125 or lmitrani@rasg.org