

VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE

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SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND OF VENTURA COUNTRY RECEIVES \$200,000 GRANT FROM JAMES IRVINE FOUNDATION

CAMARILLO – The Social Justice Fund of Ventura County has announced a grant from the James Irvine Foundation. The grant of \$200,000 over three years will support a sustainability and capacity building project of the Social Justice Fund (SJF). This includes the expansion of community-building activities and strategic, institutional development. The grant will assist the SJF in developing the funding, leadership and infrastructure for its ongoing success.

The James Irvine Foundation is a nonprofit, private foundation with the mission of expanding opportunity for the people of California to participate in a vibrant, successful and inclusive society. In investing in organizations, Irvine considers the institution's life cycle – whether the organization is in startup mode, a growth stage, or well established – and seeks to provide support appropriate to its situation.

The SJF is created and guided by a “Giving Circle” of community donors and hosted by the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF). Its mission is to strengthen social justice in Ventura County by providing financial grants and other support to grassroots groups working toward systemic changes that address social, economic and environmental inequities.

“This fund is a unique, innovative experiment for increasing local resource to support progressive community change,” says Stephanie Angelini, chair of the Steering Committee. “We are one of only a handful of SJ funds that are partnered with a community foundation, plus we make our grants through a giving circle. The giving circle model reflects an organization that is concerned about social justice and community efforts.”

Over the past three years an ever-expanding group of community residents has researched, planned, organized and tested this concept. Fifty donors actively participated in the SJF's first Giving Circle organized to provide a hands-on learning experience in social justice philanthropy which resulted in grants totaling \$50,000 to seven grassroots organizations engaged in community organizing and social justice advocacy.

“We are delighted to expand our partnership with the Irvine Foundation on this new venture, one led by members of the community,” thanked Hugh Ralston, president & CEO of VCCF. “This is a tremendous vote of confidence in this effort, one that VCCF is pleased to be able to assist through hosting the Fund and supporting the giving circle members to identify and support grass roots organizations engaged in this work. This is a significant step forward in providing an enduring source of funds to address these communities needs.”

In 2008, the Social Justice Fund will provide a minimum of \$50,000 in financial grants and other support to organizations in Ventura County working to influence community changes that will reduce inequities, lack of opportunity, and discrimination. To be a member of the Giving Circle, or for more information please call 805/988-0196 or visit the web site at www.vccf.org.