



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VCCF OPENS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION SEASON
WITH THREE NEW FUNDS AND \$1.2 MILLION TO AWARD**

CAMARILLO, Calif. (Nov. 28, 2011) – The Ventura County Community Foundation invites Ventura County students to apply for scholarships totaling \$1.2 million for the 2012-2013 school year.

VCCF will award \$370,000 more in scholarships in this cycle than it did last year due in part to the recovery of its endowment portfolio after the market crash of 2008-09 combined with a fiscal restraint policy enacted during the depths of the financial turmoil two years ago, said Hugh Ralston, VCCF president and CEO.

“In a proactive move in 2009, our board reduced the percentage permitted for annual distribution to preserve the principal in each fund and to remain consistent with our long-term disciplined investment strategy. That approach benefits this year’s applicants, and those in future years,” he said.

“VCCF has also opened new scholarship funds and received gifts and grants to expand the program,” Ralston said.

New this year, the Merfeld Family Foundation Scholarship will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who come from a family where a parent has been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or Lou Gehrig’s disease. Started by Agoura Hills resident Greg Merfield, himself recently diagnosed with ALS, the Merfeld fund will award four scholarships averaging \$2,500 each.

Semiconductor manufacturer Semtech has introduced a scholarship for Ventura County students who study physics, engineering, chemistry, math or business at an accredited community college or four-year university in the United States. With

operations in Camarillo, Semtech will award two \$5,000 scholarships to be paid at \$1,250 over four years.

The Ray Libero Sepulveda/Ray Garcia Latino Town Hall Scholarship joins the VCCF scholarship program this year and will grant two \$2,500 awards. Previously a school managed scholarship, it is reserved for a graduating senior from Fillmore, Oxnard or Santa Paula high schools who demonstrate financial need and have a minimum 3.0 GPA. Children of farmworkers receive preference in the selection process.

Applying for a scholarship from any of the nearly 100 funds at VCCF is a two-step process which involves an online and a paper component. Applicants must pre-register on vccf.org by 5 p.m. Jan. 4, 2012. Click on the “apply/donate to a scholarship” link at the top of the page to complete the registration or explore which scholarships might fit a student’s needs and qualifications. The deadline to deliver complete application packets to VCCF’s offices is 5 p.m. Jan. 6, 2012.

New this year, students can get expert advice on how to fill out their applications at free workshops offered by VCCF’s skilled scholarship staff. Workshops are scheduled for 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Dec. 21, 22 and 28. For more information on these one-hour sessions, contact LaToya Ford at lford@vccf.org or phone her at (805) 988-0196, Ext. 126. Reservations are required.

For more on VCCF’s 2012 scholarship guidelines, go to vccf.org/scholarship.

About VCCF

VCCF invests the charitable capital that drives the philanthropic engines of Ventura County. Its portfolio performance ranks in the top 10 of all community foundations in the United States for long-term growth. With total assets of \$97.7 million, its mission is to promote and enable philanthropy to improve our community for good for ever, which it does through grantmaking, scholarships and training at its Center for Nonprofit Leadership. Visit vccf.org or call (805) 988-0196.

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