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VCCF SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR KESA RYONO UNSUNG HERO AWARD

CAMARILLO, Calif. (Feb. 1, 2012) – The Ventura County Community Foundation seeks nominations for the Kesa Ryono Unsung Hero Award to honor a Ventura County resident who works diligently and without fanfare to better the quality of life in his or her neighborhood.

Named for the Port Hueneme community activist who died in March 2010 at age 47, the award will be presented at VCCF's third annual Community Leadership Awards ceremony in April, when the foundation recognizes organizations and individuals who have shown exemplary philanthropic leadership.

The deadline for nominations is Feb. 24, and the winner will be chosen by the VCCF board.

Janet Bridgers, of Oxnard, won the inaugural Ryono award in 2011 for her campaign to preserve the environment, as well as building alliances between local communities. She founded Earth First, a media-oriented nonprofit concerned with the natural environment.

At the time of her death Ryono worked at the community foundation as an associate for the Ventura County Civic Alliance, a VCCF initiative of civic leaders focused on developing strategies for sustainability of the region's environment, workforce and communities. The mother of two daughters, she became a leader in the campaign to shut down the toxic Halaco smelting plant adjacent to the Oxnard park and beach where her girls played.

Ryono served on the Port Hueneme Parks and Recreation Commission and the Ventura County Fish and Game Commission. In 2002, she was named Activist of the year by the Sierra Club's Los Padres Chapter. She ran for a seat on the Port Hueneme City Council in 2008. Although she lost, she developed what she called the 5/50 Campaign, advocating everyone complete five hours of volunteer work per month and give \$50 to charity each year. A copy of her call to action is posted on the VCCF website at vccf.org/kesaryonoawards.

Email nominating statements to jschmalzel@vccf.org or mail them to Kesa Ryono Award Nominations, c/o Ventura County Community Foundation, 1317 Del Norte Road, Suite 150, Camarillo, CA 93010.

About VCCF

VCCF invests the charitable capital that drives the philanthropic engines of Ventura County. Its portfolio performance ranks in the top 11 of all community foundations in the United States for long-term growth. With total assets of \$101.7 million of Sept. 30, 2011, 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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