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**Contact: Hugh J. Ralston, President & CEO,
Ventura County Community
Foundation
(805) 988-0196, Ext. 116**

**ARTSLIVE ANNOUNCES \$129,950 IN INAUGURAL GRANTS
Initiative at Ventura County Community Foundation joins artists and nonprofits
in seeking creative solutions to community issues**

CAMARILLO, Calif. (May 1, 2009) – ArtsLIVE in Ventura County has named the winners of its inaugural round of grants. A total of \$129,950 was awarded to two dozen nonprofits and individual artists who submitted proposals showing how they would use creative expression to address community issues such as homelessness, hunger and illiteracy. The winning proposals highlight the creativity of youth, seniors and traditionally underserved communities in Ventura County.

Working in partnership with the Ventura County Arts Council, the Ventura County Community Foundation launched ArtsLIVE in Ventura County in 2008, as part of the James Irvine Foundation’s *Communities Advancing the Arts*. This three-year initiative aims to increase support for the arts in Ventura County through grants, management training for local arts organizations, community convenings and specific goals to increase charitable capital for the arts. In all, ArtsLIVE will award \$240,000 in grants – funded by the Irvine Foundation, VCCF community grant funds and other contributions – to local arts nonprofits and individual artists.

This year’s grantees include a proposal to adapt Shakespeare for young children, to inspire teens to create a mural depicting the endangered creatures living in the waters off of Ventura County’s coast as well as to publish a collection of autobiographies written by incarcerated youth.

“We are excited by the creativity, imagination and outreach these grants will demonstrate,” said VCCF President and CEO Hugh Ralston. “These nonprofits are providing important ways to connect people, often across traditional boundaries.”

“In these challenging times – when we need creative solutions and ideas more than ever – these proposals truly show the arts are alive and well in this region,” Ralston said.

A reception honoring the arts organizations, artists and community partners will be held 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, May 21, at the Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Road, Ventura.

A total of \$90,000 will be given to grantees in the nonprofit sector. The 16 winning organizations are:

- Bell Arts Factory, as fiscal sponsor for Ventura Film Festival – \$4,030 for the *Seeds of Life* film project as part of the *Neighborhood Cinema Program*;
- Bell Arts Factory – \$7,500 to support the continuation of the *Youth Art Programs* and *Community Room Activities*;
- Buenaventura Art Association – \$5,300 for the *PhotoVentura '09 Project*, specifically the *Kidz Snap! Program*;
- California Literary Arts Society – \$4,600 to support the design and publication of 500 paperbacks illustrating biographical narratives written by teen-age boys currently in the juvenile justice system;
- California Poets in the Schools – \$5,000 to revamp and strengthen the *Ventura Poets of Tomorrow Program*;
- CAUSE, as the fiscal sponsor for Arts for Action – \$7,920 for the *Paint Not Prison Program*, providing youth an interactive arts education, including fine art skills and public art planning;
- City of Ventura Cultural Affairs Division – \$7,500 to support *ArtWalk* and the *Youth Media Workshop*;
- Community Access Partners of San Buenaventura (CAPS-TV) – \$5,000 to expand the 2009 *CAPS for Kids Program*;
- Focus on the Masters – \$7,500 for the Marketing and Outreach Initiative;
- FOOD Share, as the fiscal sponsor for Empty Bowls Project – \$2,500 to support the production of ceramic bowls made by students, seniors and families for the *1st Annual Empty Bowl Project*;
- Foundation for Educational and Employment Resources Development – \$6,000 for the *Life In Ink Project*.
- Kingsmen Shakespeare Company – \$2,000 to pay a professional scriptwriter to adapt Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* for younger audiences in Ventura County;

- Oxnard Housing Authority –\$7,500 for the Resident Initiatives Program’s *Youth Digital Photography Project*;
- Performances to Grow On – \$7,500 to expand the *Storytelling and Literacy Workshops* to Title I schools in the Oxnard Plain;
- Santa Paula Art Museum – \$7,150 for the *Educational Outreach Program*;
- Ventura County Maritime Museum – \$3,000 for the *Plein Air Art Student Scholarship Challenge*;

A total of \$39,950 – which includes a grant from ArtsLIVE and a match from the community partner – will be given to the eight winning individual artists.

“The ultimate goal of this effort is to show how artists can interact with other sectors of the community to their mutual benefit, solving challenges in the county, while at the same time using the inherent power of the arts experience to reach more local residents,” said Margaret Travers, executive director of the Ventura County Arts Council. The Arts Council is managing the grants program for individual artists, which creates an innovative partnership between artists and local nonprofits to call attention to key issues in our communities.

The grantees are:

- Richard Brimer, Camarillo, (\$5,000) working with the ACTION Foundation, Camarillo, to create “Without Shelter,” a documentary film focusing on efforts to alleviate the challenges faced by the homeless, as seen through the eyes of an individual person living on the streets.
- Colleen Cason, Thousand Oaks, (\$3,700) working with the Long Term Care Ombudsman, Ventura, to create a video focused on long-term care and nursing home issues. Her film will feature a senior who was once a contributing member of our community who now depends on the advocacy of LTCO, which protects the frail elderly in long-term care.
- Donna Granata, Ventura, (\$7,000) to create, promote and exhibit portraits of three accomplished Latino artists to be part of the Focus on the Masters archives of 135 artists, and to be exhibited as part of “The Art of Building Community,” the first exhibit at the John Spoor Broome Library, CSUCI, Camarillo.
- MB Hanrahan, Ventura, (\$5,500) working with the students of Pacific High School, Ventura, on an interdisciplinary project that will culminate in a dimensional exterior mural. To develop the subject matter of the mural, students will be studying marine life of the Central Coast with emphasis on endangered species and sharks.
- Katrina Maksimuk, Ventura, (\$5,675) working with the Ventura County Rainbow Alliance, to create “The History Project” which will document lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered senior couples who live in Ventura County. Included in the film will be a social historical insight into the lives of LGBT persons.

- Jillian Nye, Ventura, (\$5,032) partnering with Prototypes Women’s Center, Oxnard, to give four weeks of classes which will include beauty make-over sessions for residents plus teaching them how to draw and paint portraits of themselves and each other, leading to increased self-esteem. An onsite art exhibit with an opening reception will be held to display the portraits.
- Emily Thompson, Ventura, (\$3,043) a 3-day program capturing the native and natural beauty of the Channel Islands National Park working with children from the Girls Club of Ventura Alliance League where they will produce sketches and photographs to exhibit during *PhotoVentura '09*.
- Hiroko Yoshimoto, Ventura, (\$5,000) working with Ventura College Foundation to exhibit original paintings depicting the aftermath of area wildfires, using charcoal and ashes collected at the wildfire sites. During the exhibit, talks will be given by the firefighters and environmentalists on fire safety and the devastation to our environment caused by the fires.

“The important story of these grants programs is that the arts of all disciplines have a value to the community far beyond entertainment or leisure time activities,” Travers noted. “When artists bring creative thinking, leadership skills and a deep commitment to their partnerships in the community, the arts are a valuable tool for making our county more livable,” she added.

The Ventura County Community Foundation is a family of 500 charitable funds with total assets of \$96 million, which distributed \$5.6 million grants and pledges in 2008. The Foundation’s mission is to promote and enable philanthropy to improve our community for good for ever, building long-term charitable capital to benefit Ventura County. The Foundation has been confirmed in compliance with national standards by the Council on Foundations, a reflection of the highest peer review across the nations 700 community foundations. For more information on other programs and initiatives under the ArtsLIVE in Ventura County initiative, visit www.artslivinVC.org, or visit www.vccf.org.

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