



Community Foundation for Monterey County

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
January 17, 2007

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Literacy Campaign to Improve Local Adult Literacy – \$300,000 Awarded in Grants

Monterey, CA. In Monterey County, 25% of adults read below the 4th grade level, only 68% have completed high school, and 55% of adults seeking services say their inability to speak English is a barrier. Businesses say that employees in entry level positions are not prepared to perform basic job responsibilities. In response, the Community Foundation for Monterey County, in partnership with other funders such as the AT&T Pebble Beach Charities/Monterey Peninsula Foundation, is coordinating a five-year, multi-million dollar campaign to offer literacy services to adults ages 18 to 35, especially parents with young children. Mary Wright, Community Foundation Board Chair (2004-06) said of the Literacy Campaign,

“We have learned that the Community Foundation can play a unique role in convening all the stakeholders with an interest in working together on some of the toughest issues that we face in Monterey County. There is real value in stimulating dialogue among both public and private parties, foundations of all types and sizes, and service providers to seek long-term solutions to our toughest challenges. We now feel that the time has come to mobilize the entire community around an issue that affects the lives and livelihoods of thousands of our neighbors.”

In December 2006, the Literacy Campaign for Monterey County awarded its first grants totaling \$300,000. Grants were awarded to:

- **Alisal Community Healthy Start: \$100,000** (POC: Annabelle Rodriguez, Manager, 775-4500) for basic literacy programs in East Salinas and Soledad communities
- **Monterey County Free Libraries: \$45,000** (POC: Leslie Payne, Managing Librarian for Special Services, 796-6004) to expand tutoring programs at Seaside and Soledad libraries
- **Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association Inc. (CHISPA): \$45,000** (POC: Ruth Rodriguez, Community Services Coordinator, 757-6251) for basic literacy programs in Greenfield
- **North Monterey County Unified School District: \$40,000** (POC: Linda Mann, PhD., Assistant Superintendent, 633-3343) for an adult literacy program in Castroville

- **Chartwell School: \$30,000** (POC: Kristen Atkins, Outreach Director, 394-3468) for literacy educator and tutor training countywide
- **Central Coast Citizenship Project: \$20,000** (POC: Cesar Lara, Executive Director, 424-2713) for workplace literacy programs in King City and Greenfield
- **Volunteer Center of Monterey County: \$20,000** (POC: Mary Adams, President, United Way Monterey County, 647-2170) to recruit literacy volunteers countywide.

The Literacy Campaign, guided by a Steering Committee of local educators, government agencies, business representatives, the media, and funders, is taking a collaborative approach with its grant making. In 2005 and 2006, the Community Foundation for Monterey County researched local and national literacy needs and programs. As the funding guidelines were being developed, the Campaign organized public meetings with literacy providers, nonprofit agencies, and current and potential literacy students. "Our hope is to act as a catalyst for positive change. When we met with local stakeholders, we learned that they want regional literacy coordination. If someone wants to improve their literacy skills, they need to know what services are available. Through these grants, we are encouraging agencies to work together to implement a coordinated system of literacy services," said Todd Lueders, President/CEO of the Community Foundation. Campaign funding partners include AT&T Pebble Beach Charities/Monterey Peninsula Foundation, First 5 Monterey County, Monterey County Department of Social and Employment Services, Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The four primary outcomes of the Campaign are for 1) young adults to attain literacy through the high school level, 2) young adults are able to become employed and advance in local workplaces, 3) young adults read to children to improve their own literacy and to help children prepare for and improve their success in school, and 4) that all people in the community support literacy as a basic human need.

The mission of the Community Foundation for Monterey County is to improve the quality of life in Monterey County by raising, managing, and distributing charitable funds to worthy organizations and by creating positive connections between donors and their interests. For more information about the Community Foundation for Monterey County and the Literacy Campaign, visit www.cfmco.org or www.literacycampaignmc.org.

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