

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### LOCAL CHAMPIONS HONORED BY PROJECT CORNERSTONE

*February 10, 2005* - Project Cornerstone will honor several local advocates at their Second Annual Asset Champions Breakfast on February 17, 2005 in San Jose. The following outstanding Asset Champions have been named in five categories:

**Adult Role Model**

*Sgt. John Rose, San Jose Police Department*

**Community Values Youth**

*Andrea Schacter, San Jose Library*

**Positive Peer Influence**

*Unidos Club, Mountain View High School*

**Positive Cultural Identity**

*Los Dichos Moms, Easterbrook Discovery and A. Darling Elementary Schools*

**Caring School Climate**

*Booksin Elementary, San Jose Unified School District*

#### ADULT ROLE MODEL

*Sgt. John Rose, San Jose Police Department*

Sgt. Rose oversees Challenges and Choices (C2), a 10 week program that teaches 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders how to make good decisions around gangs, drugs and violence. He also manages Safe Alternatives Violence Education (SAVE), a diversion program for juveniles who commit minor weapons offenses.

In addition, Sgt. Rose has provided assets education material to the High School Police Academy program and at San Jose Police Basic Academy. As a result, nearly 360 new officers are aware of and able to implement asset building.

#### COMMUNITY VALUES YOUTH

*Andrea Schacter, San Jose Library*

Ms. Schacter is coordinator and advocate for the Library's teensReach youth council and volunteer group. TeensReach members are 13 to 18 years old and come from diverse backgrounds to serve as advisors to the San Jose Public Library and as library advocates in the community. Under her leadership, membership in teensReach has grown from 50 to 392.

Andrea makes libraries places where youth feel welcome. A survey on the library's teen web page encourages feedback and suggestions from youth. TeensReachers met with Andrea and an interior designer to choose furniture

and fixtures for the teen centers being planned in new branches. And, through her annual Teen Art Contest, youth proudly display their creations at the library and win prizes for their work.

#### POSITIVE PEER INFLUENCE

##### *Unidos Club, Mountain View High School*

Formed in 2003, Unidos was designed as an outreach program to bring Mountain View High School students to Castro Elementary School in an effort to help the younger students with their learning needs. Castro is home to seriously challenged students and Unidos matched high school Spanish-language learners with elementary-aged English-language learners. This gave both parties the opportunity to practice and develop their second language in a dynamic, real-life setting.

Today, over 80 Mountain View High School students carpool to make the weekly trek to Castro in order to help their younger “buddies”. High school students pass their well-developed sense of themselves as school community members to their younger counterparts, and have become valuable role models for how to be academically productive and enjoy themselves at the same time.

#### POSITIVE CULTURAL IDENTITY

##### *Los Dichos Moms, Easterbrook Discovery and A. Darling Elementary Schools [Flor Munoz, Elizabeth Oyarzabal, Sandra Munoz, Isidra Garcia, Irma Macias, Felicitas Balderrama, Julia Cipriano, Rosa Ochoa, Guadalupe Alvarez, Laura Santana, Socorro Jiminez, Patricia Bautista, Elena Cardenas, Lucia Gomez, Sandra Govea, Marta Carrillo]*

The mothers of Los Dichos come to each classroom at EDS and A. Darling once a month to share the traditions of their culture through literature and activities. These moms, who are fluent only in Spanish (although many speak some English), read a story to the children in Spanish and then the teacher reads the same story in English. This builds dual language skills among all the children, fosters a sense of cultural identity and appreciation, and allows the children to see their mothers in the front of the classroom. After the story has been read, the mothers lead the children in a corresponding activity. For example, after reading Que Monton de Tamales! (Too Many Tamales!), the children learned how to make tamales.

The Los Dichos program is only in its first year, but there has already been incredible growth in the number of mothers who participate. Where these women once thought involvement in their children’s school would be impossible because of the language barrier, they have now discovered that they play an invaluable role in building a multitude of developmental assets for all the children in each classroom.

#### CARING SCHOOL CLIMATE

##### *Booksin Elementary, San Jose Unified School District*

Booksin Elementary has involved its entire “village” - teachers, students, parents and administrators - to create a caring school climate where students

succeed academically, socially and emotionally. This effort is taking place on two fronts.

First, administrators and teachers received training from Project Cornerstone to better understand and prevent bullying behaviors at their school. The responsibility for maintaining a bully-free environment extends to students as well. In fact, a student team participated in the "Leadership Challenge" program to help them develop and implement their action plans for a safe, caring school.

Second, several parents recently completed a "Taking Asset Building Personally" study group to create asset-building experiences for students on the school playground, which is where bullying often occurs. Now, "Fun Fridays" are the highlight of each week for the Booksin community. Parents come during the lunch hour and engage children in various activities; jump ropes, Frisbee, reading and music, to name a few. Once a month, these parents are also in every classroom promoting anti-bullying behaviors by using literacy and activities to engage students in thoughtful dialogue.

Project Cornerstone will also publicly announce the results from the Fall 2004 survey of over 15,000 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders throughout Santa Clara County. 94 schools in 12 districts throughout Silicon Valley participated in the survey, which measures how well the community is supporting and guiding today's youth. Based on extensive studies conducted by Search Institute, a national nonprofit organization, the survey assesses students' experiences, known as developmental assets, with key relationships, opportunities, values and skills they need to grow up to be caring, responsible adults.

[www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org)

The Asset Champions Breakfast will be held at the Hyatt San Jose, Mediterranean Center; 1740 North First Street, San Jose. Media kits, including 2004 survey overview information, will be available at the VIP Media Table the morning of the breakfast. For event information and to RSVP, please contact Brenda Komar.

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