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**DESTINO AWARDS \$60,000 FOR LITERACY & EXPANDING HEALTH CARE
DESTINO SCHOLARSHIP FUND TO BENEFIT FROM DONATIONS**

Camarillo, CALIF. - (March 24, 2008) – On April 17, *Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund* will award eight grants totaling \$60,000 to programs serving the County's Latino community that further financial and reading literacy and promote health care professionals within the Latino community. These reflect priorities outlined in the landmark 2006 *Destino* health care report, funded by The California Endowment as part of its Focus Funders Program. *Destino's* 2008 grants came from distributions from its endowment fund, part of the Ventura County Community Foundation.

This annual grantee reception will be held at the Derby Club at Seaside Park in Ventura.

In its 12th year, *Destino* is an endowed grantmaking fund established by local donors and businesses at the Ventura County Community Foundation. Since its founding, *Destino* has given 102 grants totaling over \$729,768, impacting over 42 community organizations and approximately 34,000 Latino youth and adults in Ventura County.

"We take pride in knowing that these grants prove that Latino philanthropy is alive and well in Ventura County," said Hank Lacayo, chair of the Vision Committee and VCCF board member. "It is further reflection of *Destino's* mission to be a bridge to a stronger and more informed Latino community, and to demonstrating the impact of working together to make a difference for the future of our County."

The following organizations will be receiving *Destino* grants for 2008, which were determined by the grants committee of donors and volunteers. The 2008 grantees are:

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- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ventura County, Inc.** - \$10,000 for the Fillmore/Piru Mentor Program Health Career Initiative, exposing middle and high school youths to a wide variety of health careers, helping youths to understand the skills and academic preparation necessary to pursue a career in the health field through mentorship, field trips to local clinics and hospitals, and presentations from health care professionals.
- **Boys & Girls Club of Greater Oxnard & Pt. Hueneme** - \$5,000 for the Money Matters program, teaching junior and high school youths financial skills through interactive activities on topics including the use of a checking account, saving for college, and investment basics in order to prepare teens to make smart financial decisions in the future.
- **California State University Channel Islands Foundation** - \$10,000 for Diversity Scholarships for the Nursing Program Students. Funds will enhance the scholarship pool available for Latino students in need of financial aid to pursue a nursing program and career in nursing.
- **El Centrito Family Learning Centers** - \$9,255 to support the Parent and Child Interactive Literacy Activities component of the Family Literacy Program which includes a daily 45-minute parent-child interaction of literacy activities such as reading, playing together or group singing activities with other children and parents.
- **Friends of Blanchard Community Library** - \$3,745 for the Financial Resources and Economic Education component of the Family Literacy Program, providing financial information that is designed for Santa Paula's immigrant population with low English literacy levels and helping them gain control over their own finances, improve their English skills, and learn how to involve their young children in learning about money matters.
- **Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project** - \$10,000 to support the Next Generation project which aims to create a network of adolescent promotores de salud who will conduct peer outreach in the County's Mixtec Community. The year-long program will specifically train six Mixtec high school students to outreach and deliver critical health and wellness information to their Mixtec peers.
- **VC Medical Center - Family Medicine Residency Program** - \$3,000 for the Summer Student Scholars Program, providing college students who have strong interest in the health care field to expand and solidify their interest through a hands-on 8 week clinical and research opportunity at the Ventura County Medical Center. Funds will enable two students to participate in the program, shadow physicians providing patient care, and spend time with a faculty developing and implementing a clinical research project on a medical topic of interest.

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- **Westminster Free Clinic** - \$9,000 to support the Teen Healthcare Training Program that offers Latino high school students an opportunity to have a comprehensive healthcare experience where they can actively be part of a medical team, do community outreach and make a difference in the uninsured, low-income community. Trainings and fieldtrips will expose the students to a variety of healthcare career opportunities.

The keynote address will be made by Rudolph I. Estrada, the Director of the Small Business Institute and a faculty member in Business and Management at California State University Channel Islands.

The grants will be awarded at a Grants Reception on Thursday, April 17, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at The Derby Club, Island View Room, 10 West Harbor Blvd., in Ventura. The reception is underwritten by Ovations/FanFare Contributions to the Destino Scholarship Fund are suggested for attendees.

All proceeds from the event will be used to expand the Destino Scholarship Fund, established as part of the Destino endowment, which provides annual scholarships to first generation Latino college students from Ventura County.

For more information about *Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund*, please visit VCCF's website at www.vccf.org, or contact Catherine Lee at 805-988-0196 ext. 115. The 2006 Destino study is also available on the website, under Destino.

The Ventura County Community Foundation is a family of charitable funds whose combined assets now exceed \$110 million, with 2007 grants and pledges of \$4.1 million. The Foundation's mission is to promote and enable philanthropy to improve our community and to build 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 nation's 700 community foundations. For more information, visit www.vccf.org

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