

NEWS RELEASE
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Sonoma Valley Fund Underwrites Gang Prevention Forums

December 17, 2007 – Sonoma, CA – The Sonoma Valley Fund, responding to the critical issue of gang violence, has stepped forward to help underwrite the continuation of forums on gang prevention. Board President Whitney Evans presented a check to the Sonoma Nonprofit Collaborative, which saw the immediate need for community dialogue, education and coordination following a gang-related homicide in Maxwell Park last October and created the series of forums. “The Sonoma Valley Fund believes these discussions are a critical first step in developing a comprehensive response to gang violence in our neighborhoods that can potentially serve as a model for other communities facing similar issues,” said Evans.

The last of these five forums was held on December 17th with Bob Florez of Kids in Community and Florez Youth Insights facilitating. Turnout at each meeting has included parents, mentors, neighbors, businesses and educators and numbers have approached nearly 200. Due to the positive response and engaged dialogue, another forum is scheduled for Monday, January 14, 2008, 6:30 pm at the El Verano School gym. Childcare and simultaneous Spanish translation will be available. This additional session will focus on community dialogue and feedback on potential solutions and proactive programs. For more information, call 933-0404, ext. 120.

Anna Pier, Director of Educational Programs at CommonBond Foundation, underscored the significance of these community forums “as an important beginning, a launching pad for solutions” and encourages everyone to be part of the solution. Members of the Sonoma Nonprofit Collaborative include the Boys and Girls Club Valley of the Moon, CommonBond Foundation, La Luz Center, Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance, Sonoma Valley Unified School District, VOM teen center, Hanna Boys Center, Nuestra Voz, Sonoma Valley Ministerial Association and Social Advocates for Youth.

The Sonoma Valley Fund was established in December 2006 as an affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County to strengthen and preserve our community and its values. Its mission is to create a permanent endowment that will provide a reliable stream of income for charitable works in the Sonoma Valley area. Donors may make gifts to benefit specific causes important to them or rely on the fund's Board of Directors to respond to changing community needs through its grantmaking programs. Although only a year old, the Sonoma Valley Fund has over \$1 million in charitable legacy gifts, organizational funds and donor-advised funds, and has awarded \$22,000 in grants to local nonprofit organizations. For more information, visit www.sonomavalleyfund.org.

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