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**NEWS RELEASE
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Dick Drew to Head Sonoma Valley Fund's Youth Initiative

Richard (Dick) Drew, long-time educator and school administrator, has been tapped by the Sonoma Valley Fund as Chair of its new Coordinating Council for Youth Development in Sonoma (CCYDS, pronounced KIDS). CCYDS was recently established by SVF's Board to implement recommendations from its Youth Initiative and will consist of seven to nine community leaders committed to Valley youth efforts. While the Chair and council members are volunteer positions, Drew is seeking to hire a part-time Council Executive to carry out the day-to-day work (including research on innovative programs) and to serve as a spokesperson along with the Council Chair. Interested potential candidates should contact Joe Valentine, Affiliates Relations Officer at Community Foundation Sonoma County, jvalentine@sonomacf.org, to request application information. The deadline for submission is February 1, 2010.

Background: In early 2009, the Sonoma Valley Fund established a Youth Initiative Committee to explore the many challenges facing Sonoma Valley's youth, triggered by the late October 2008 killing of a Latino youth in Maxwell Park. Important concerns include the perceived low numbers of local high school students going on to college or meaningful jobs, continuing reports of significant drug and alcohol problems among Valley youth, and disappointing levels of academic performance versus comparable schools around the state.

Over a nine-month period, the Committee met with more than sixty people involved with youth issues in Sonoma Valley; they included middle and high school students, parents, heads of youth-oriented nonprofits, school administrators and teachers, local experts, philanthropists, and others who have been involved with youth issues for years.

On November 19, 2009, the board of the Sonoma Valley Fund adopted the recommendations presented by the Youth Initiative Committee. While these encompass a broad range of efforts for Valley youth of all ages, the primary focus of CCYDS should be programs and activities directed at late elementary and middle school kids. To review the full report and recommendations, see www.sonomavalleyfund.org, and click the Youth Initiative tab.

Future Potential: The Sonoma Valley Fund has unique potential for making a positive difference on youth issues. No organization is better positioned to work with the Valley's youth-oriented nonprofits, agencies, and the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. It has relationships with community members active in Valley youth efforts and with Community Foundation Sonoma County whose resources can be drawn upon. Over time, self directed Sonoma Valley Fund legacy donations may well provide significant financial resources for youth and education issues. SVF can call upon its relationships with community leaders and local media to educate and marshal support for worthy initiatives, and it may be able to organize and add credibility to grant solicitations to major foundations for innovative new programs with potential for serving as models in other communities. In short, SVF is uniquely positioned to organize consortiums where combined resources can accomplish a common purpose to benefit Sonoma Valley youth.

Sonoma Valley Fund (SVF) was established in December 2006 as an affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County. Its mission is to strengthen our community through philanthropy and legacy giving. SVF is a resource for donors who wish to make charitable gifts, especially as part of their estate planning, to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Sonoma Valley. Donors may make gifts through a variety of programs to benefit specific causes or rely on SVF's Board of Directors who are long-term, active residents of Sonoma Valley. Since inception, it has awarded more than \$125,000 in grants to local nonprofit organizations. For more information, visit www.sonomavalleyfund.org.

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