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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Council Members, Council Executive Named for Sonoma Valley Fund's Youth Initiative

Dick Drew, Sonoma Valley Fund's Chair of the Coordinating Council for Youth Development in Sonoma (CCYDS, pronounced KIDS) announced that the following education and community leaders committed to Valley youth efforts will join him as Council members:

Education Leaders

Maite' Iturri, *Principal, El Verano School*

Karla Conroy, *Principal, Adele Harrison Middle School*

Camarino Hawing, *School Board Member*

Barbara Young, *Education Consultant, former school Superintendent*

Community Leaders

Les Vadasz, *Vadasz Family Foundation*

Pilar Cruz, *Member, District English Learners Advisory Council*

Maricarmen Reyes, *Family Services/Director of Education, La Luz Center*

Bret Sackett, *Sonoma Police Chief*

Steve Pease, *Sonoma Valley Fund Board*

Drew, a long-time educator and school administrator himself, said of this group, "I am extremely gratified that we have been able to attract community leaders and educators of this caliber. We have convened the Council and are actively working toward a 2010 summer program in conjunction with the unified school district." The Council's first order of business is to develop a comprehensive database of the existing summer programs for youth in Sonoma Valley and is focusing on ways to broaden youth programs and activities.

Drew also announced the selection of Ellen LaBruce as the part-time Council Executive to carry out the day-to-day work of the Council. LaBruce has 20+ years of nonprofit leadership experience. She spent 13 years with La Luz Center, 9 as Executive Director. Most recently she was Manager of Philanthropic Services for the Napa Valley Community Foundation. In addition to the creation of the summer program, LaBruce and the Council are preparing a business plan to implement the recommendations in Sonoma Valley Fund's Youth Initiative Report.

Background: In early 2009 the Sonoma Valley Fund established a Youth Initiative Committee to explore the many challenges facing Sonoma Valley's youth, and to attempt to address important community concerns such as 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. Over a nine-month period, the Committee met with more than sixty people, all of whom are intimately involved with youth issues in Sonoma Valley, including middle and high school students, parents, heads of youth-oriented nonprofits, school administrators and teachers, local experts, philanthropists, and others.

The outcome of these discussions was the development of specific recommendations to benefit Valley youth of all ages, with the primary focus on programs and activities directed at late elementary and middle school kids. To implement the recommendations, Sonoma Valley Fund formed the new Coordinating Council for Youth Development in Sonoma (CCYDS). To read the Youth Initiative Report, or for more information about SVF, see www.sonomavalleyfund.org, and click the Youth Initiative tab.

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. In 2009 Sonoma Valley Fund, with Community Foundation Sonoma County and their donors, awarded \$265,550 to the local community in grants and scholarships.

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