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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### **Sonoma Valley Fund's Youth Initiative Announces \$32,000 in Summer Grants**

This spring, the Coordinating Council for Youth Development in Sonoma (CCYDS), responsible for overseeing and implementing the Sonoma Valley Fund's Youth Initiative, launched two programs to support the youth of Sonoma Valley. First, the Council recommended that a grant be made to the Sonoma Valley Unified School District to realize its vision of enhancing their summer school program for fifth and eighth graders. At the same time, a CCYDS scholarship fund was recommended to help Sonoma Valley children participate in summer camp opportunities. The Sonoma Valley Fund, an affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County, tapped into the generosity of several community and business groups and individuals in order to provide the necessary funding. Both the Summer School Enhancement and the Camp Scholarship programs are underway now.

Karla Conroy, Adele Harrison Middle School principal and acting summer school administrator, said the students who were invited to the summer school program are English-language learners who aren't progressing as quickly as they should and are two to three grade levels behind in language arts and math. Sonoma Valley Fund granted \$26,000 to the Sonoma Valley Unified School District to pay for eight study trips, to hire mentors for the kids and to bring in experts for science and art. Conroy said the enhancement program would not have been possible without the funding from the Sonoma Valley Fund.

The curriculum-based study trips the fifth-graders are taking include a visit to the beach at Pt. Reyes and a marine mammal study seminar at Limantour Beach; a trip to the Egyptian Museum and Technology Museum in San Jose; and a trek to the Asian Art Museum and Chinatown in San Francisco. The eighth-graders will go to Sacramento for a state Capitol tour and a UC Davis tour; to the Exploratorium and Santa Rosa Junior College; to Angel Island for an immigration study; and also to Great America for a math and science exploration.

More than fifty youth responded to the invitation to apply for scholarships, and forty were selected, based on a written essay and financial need. Each family paid a portion of the fees and the youngsters will report on their experiences at the end of the summer. “We are thrilled to offer \$6,115 in scholarships to help youngsters learn to swim, play musical instruments, get outdoors, and participate in art camp or on sports teams,” said Harriet Derwingson, President of the Sonoma Valley Fund. “When an average scholarship of \$145 enriches a child’s summer, we feel it is money well spent.”

Donors to the SVF for the Summer School Enhancement and Camp Scholarship programs include Rotary Club of Sonoma Valley, as the principal contributor; Exchange Bank; The Scott Evans Foundation; Kiwanis Club of Sonoma Plaza; Pat and Ted Eliot; and other individuals, including those from the SVF Board of Directors and Advisors. “The Sonoma Valley Fund intends to continue these types of programs throughout the school year,” Derwingson stated. “We are looking for ongoing funding partners like the contributors above to broaden the scope of the Youth Initiative project.”

*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 created the Youth Initiative to engage young people in upper elementary and middle school grades in learning and positive experiences that will help them succeed in high school and beyond. For more information about the Sonoma Valley Youth Initiative, or the Sonoma Valley Fund, contact: Dick Drew, Chair, Coordinating Council for Youth Development in Sonoma (707.938.5837), or Ellen LaBruce, Council Executive (707.935.6486). [www.sonomavalleyfund.org](http://www.sonomavalleyfund.org)*

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