

For Immediate Release

Philanthropic Ventures Foundation Helps Impassioned Donors Provide Immediate Help to San Francisco's Budget-Crunched Schools

New "Affinity" and "Sports for Health" Programs Provide Immediate Response Grants for Low-Income Students and Much Needed Fitness Programs

Oakland, Ca (June 27, 2008) Philanthropic Ventures Foundation (PVF), the Bay Area non-profit foundation nationally recognized for its progressive "grassroots philanthropy" initiatives has instituted two new Immediate Response Grants to help low income students and provide needed sports programs at San Francisco public schools left reeling by ongoing education cuts.

- **The Affinity Program**, which provides grants of up to \$500 for low income San Francisco public school students who have been identified by a school official (teacher, counselor, nurse, administrator) as needing support to participate in extracurricular lessons or activities that support and encourage the student's talents, interests and self esteem.
- **The Sports for Health Program**, which provides grants of up to \$1,500 to San Francisco middle schools to help purchase equipment or instruction in new sports programs that promote physical activity, physical education and weight control to help students develop healthy, lifelong practices.

Both grants are part of PVF's Donor Advised Funds program, which offers donors – in this case anonymous donors – the opportunity to work with PVF to develop creative giving programs customized to their areas of interest. The new grants were announced via a single page flyer distributed to San Francisco public schools in early March, 2008. To apply for either grant, teachers, counselors and administrators were instructed to submit a single page, faxed letter to PVF on school letterhead, briefly describing the details of the grant request. Approved grants were funded within 48 hours – an unheard of turnaround in the foundation world.

PVF Founder Bill Somerville points to these grants as "extensions of our grassroots approach to philanthropy, which calls for building relationships with those professionals on the front lines of community service, like school teachers, social workers, medical personnel and juvenile court judges, in order to identify pressing needs – especially among our low-income youth, and budget-stretched schools - that can be addressed quickly and efficiently through our Immediate Response Grants".

About the Affinity Program

In the three months since being introduced, the Affinity Program has provided grants to more than 50 low-income San Francisco public school children. Among them, a 7th grader at Everett Middle School who, despite having a bone disease which causes his bones to grow abnormally, has a passion for skateboarding. With the help of an Affinity Program grant, he was able to get his own skateboard and enroll in skate camp, allowing him to enjoy physical activity and social development. Another request came to PVF from a school district nurse about a 2nd grader at Malcolm X Academy who loves to read. This student, who lives in Hunter's Point with his disabled grandmother, has battled hearing and vision problems and struggled with math and language skills. With help from the Affinity program, he was able to get a 1:1 reading coach who is helping him to catch up academically and reach his full potential. Yet another student, a 3rd grader at Jose Ortega Elementary School, whose mother died and father abandoned him, was given the opportunity to attend a summer day camp and swimming program with the Affinity Program grant requested for him by his student advisor. These camps enable him to have a healthy, productive summer outdoors with his friends.

About the Sports for Health Program

The Sports for Health program came about after a donor approached PVF with a request to develop a program to fund needed sports programs and sports equipment in San Francisco's public middle schools. Aimed at providing students with engaging and entertaining physical fitness activities in order to build healthy habits for life, the Sports for Health grants have funded a diverse number of programs including a before-school soccer program at Herbert Hoover Middle School; exercise bikes and cadence meters at Francisco Middle School; a Dance Dance Revolution video game at Marina Middle School and Latin and ballroom dance classes at Claire Lillienthal School.

About Grassroots Philanthropy and Immediate Response Grants

Grassroots Philanthropy is a term coined by PVF founder Bill Somerville, a nationally recognized expert in creative giving, to describe the foundation's community-based approach to grantmaking. In short, Grassroots Philanthropy calls for grantmakers to actively engage with the community, meet the people who are doing extraordinary work, take the occasional risk based upon personal trust, and fund those in need quickly with a minimum of process and paperwork. In his just released book, [Grassroots Philanthropy: Field Notes of a Maverick Grantmaker](#), (Heyday Press) Somerville, who is an Oakland native and the father of KTVU anchorman Frank Somerville, emphasizes the importance of finding and investing in outstanding community leaders. To do so, he says, foundations need to become more connected and nimble; spending more time in the communities they serve and less time reviewing documents at their desks.

