

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE NEW FACE OF PHILANTHROPY: LANEY COLLEGE STUDENTS  
LEARN HOW TO GIVE \$5,000**

Pioneering Bay Area Grantmaker Bill Somerville Teaches Grassroots Grantmaking in  
Nation's First Ever Community College Philanthropy Course

**Oakland, CA (January 30, 2008)** Bill Somerville, founder of the Oakland based Philanthropic Ventures Foundation, will be returning to Laney College this Spring to teach a second semester of his highly touted "Introduction to Philanthropy." **The course is the first community college level philanthropy class in the country** and was developed specifically for Laney College as part of Somerville's commitment to growing grassroots philanthropy. Introduction to Philanthropy (Sociology 248GA, 1.5 units) will be offered Thursday evenings, 6-8:00pm, February 21- May 22<sup>nd</sup> at Laney College in Oakland, CA.

"We're thrilled with the response to this class," said Somerville, "both from the students at Laney College as well as from other foundations and schools now interested in modeling a similar course after ours."

Somerville designed the course for newcomers to philanthropy who want to understand how to write a proposal for grants. Students will learn about foundation and corporate giving, as well as getting funds from individuals. Students are challenged to explore creative, non-traditional approaches to the use of philanthropic money; culminating in the students each writing actual proposals seeking \$5,000.

"We developed this class knowing that the future of philanthropy depends on more than just the wealthiest among us," explains Somerville. "To meet ever more challenging and complex needs, we must engage new people with new ideas – like those in this class – to create philanthropic initiatives in their own communities aimed at improving the lives of others. Hopefully, we're providing the tools and inspiration to do just that."

As part of the course curriculum, Somerville has arranged weekly presentations by experts in the foundation and non-profit field including: Colburn Wilbur, Past CEO and current board member, The David & Lucile Packard Foundation; Sister Rosemary and Sister Cynthia Co-Directors, The Next Step Learning Center in Oakland; Carrie Avery, Executive Director, The Durfee Foundation; Skip Rhodes, Past Executive Director, Chevron Corporate Giving Program; Robert Uyeki, Executive Director, Y & H Soda Foundation; Dan Corsello, Executive Director, van Loben Sels/RembeRock Foundation; Carla Dartis, Managing Director, The Tides Center.

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A respected innovator, with 48 years experience in the field of “grassroots” grant-making, Somerville is called upon regularly to lend his expertise to private and community foundations as well as to philanthropic departments of major universities across the United States. In early 2008, Somerville, who authors the industry periodicals *Building Community Foundations* and *Dialogue*, will release the highly anticipated, Grassroots Philanthropy: Notes of a Maverick Grantmaker in which he details the defining principles of PVF’s brand of “humanist” philanthropy.

### **About PVF**

Since its inception in 1991, Oakland-based Philanthropic Ventures Foundation (PVF) has distributed over \$50 million in grants to those who need it most; gaining national recognition for pioneering innovative approaches to grassroots philanthropy. Under the stewardship of Bill Somerville, PVF has operated as a “living lab”, incubating first-of-their-kind funding programs including: Immediate Response Grants delivered in less than 48 hours of request; Paperless Grants, requiring a single page request; First Response Disaster Relief, which guarantees \$25,000 to ten designated agencies addressing emergency food and shelter needs for the needy during a natural disaster; and the Juvenile Judges Program, which provides immediate grants to youth in the foster care system as identified by Juvenile Court Judges. The PVF model champions people and ideas over paper trails and risk aversion in order to maximize the social impact of every donated dollar. In addition to their own programs, PVF works with donors and private foundations to customize their giving to specific areas or programs of interest. PVF is also called upon regularly to lend expertise to private and community foundations as well as to philanthropic departments of major universities and colleges across the United States. PVF is a 501(c)(3) Public Charity. Philanthropic Ventures Foundation. 1222 Preservation Park Way, Oakland, CA 94612. [www.venturesfoundation.org](http://www.venturesfoundation.org)

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