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## **Cultural Initiatives Releases New Study - *Immigrant Participatory Arts: An Insight into Community-building in Silicon Valley***

**Findings reveal that arts participation in immigrant communities enhances civic and social engagement, while maintaining cultural identity.**

San José, CA – Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley today released the results of a groundbreaking study that examines participation in the arts by immigrants to Silicon Valley. *Immigrant Participatory Arts: An Insight into Community-building in Silicon Valley* by Dr. Pia Moriarty finds that the dominant reason for the existence of amateur arts groups in immigrant communities derives from a strong desire of parents to maintain the structure, values, language, and traditions of their families.

The study concludes that the participatory arts serve essential functions for Silicon Valley's immigrants and refugees in their ability to help them assimilate (to become civically and socially engaged) as well as, maintain their cultural identity for their children.

Santa Clara County's population is 61% foreign born immigrants and their children. The County is home to people from 177 of the 194 nations of the world. Dr. Moriarty states that this region "offers a prime opportunity for studying the socioeconomic effects of globalization on the fabric of civic life in the United States."

John Kreidler, Cultural Initiatives' Executive Director, commented on the significance of the study: "Research into professional arts organizations and professional artists are relatively well-researched and funded, while artistic expression in which amateur artists actively engage is not. Cultural Initiatives commissioned this study of the participatory arts sector so that Silicon Valley's cultural vitality can ultimately be understood and enhanced."

The study focused on the County's largest immigrant and refugee population groups: people arriving from Mexico, Vietnam, China, India, Iran, and the Philippines, as well as multi-ethnic Islamic communities. The study's findings are indicative, and meant to identify cultural patterns, as well as lay groundwork for additional studies of trends in art-making.

Close to 90 participatory arts groups were sources for the six-month study, including Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana (MACLA), Association for Viet Arts, Firebird Chinese Youth Orchestra, Iranian Federated Women's Club, African-American Community Service Agency, and Hindu Temple & Community

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Center South Bay. Data was gathered at over 100 performances, rehearsals, planning meetings, amateur museum exhibits, street festivals, ethnic-based arts/language schools, and arts-mediated religious events.

"Silicon Valley contains an abundance of avocational performing arts groups that have been assembled here by recent immigrants from all parts of the world," said Susan Hammer, former City of San José Mayor and Cultural Initiatives' Board President. "*Immigrant Participatory Arts* documents the daily contributions these groups are making to the liveliness of the Valley's cultural life and enhanced sense of community."

*Immigrant Participatory Arts: An Insight into Community-building in Silicon Valley* is available from Cultural Initiatives in a 58-page paperback format including photographs. The study is also available online at [www.ci-sv.org](http://www.ci-sv.org) in PDF format.

*The Inquires into Culture Series* was initiated in 2002 with *The Creative Community Index*, a study of the supply and demand dynamics of the arts in Silicon Valley based on a survey of 300 adults. A third publication is planned for 2005. Cultural Initiatives has commissioned cultural anthropologist, Dr. Maribel Alvarez, to focus on the participatory arts groups that are not tied to the special family circumstances of immigrant communities.

The research is funded by The Rockefeller Foundation, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, as well as The Fund for Folk Culture's California Traditional Arts Advancement Program which is funded by The James Irvine Foundation and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley is a public benefit organization formed in response to the research and planning efforts of over 1,000 committed community leaders, and dedicated to the development of a comprehensive plan for the cultural transformation of Silicon Valley. Its mission is to advance the vitality of Silicon Valley through broad cultural participation, quality creative education in our schools and development of an informed and committed leadership in the community.

The Board of Directors of Cultural Initiatives includes Susan Hammer, former Mayor of San José; Kim Walesh, City of San José's Assistant Director of Economic Development; Bob Wayman, Chief Financial Officer of Hewlett-Packard Company; Kim Polese, Co-founder of Marimba Inc.; Harry J. Saal, Chairman, Octago, Inc.; Michael Hackworth, Founder of Cirrus Logic, Inc.; Mai Bui, Chair of Viet Arts; Virginia Chang Kiraly, Venture Partner, Mirador Capital; Christine Harris, Board Member of Salzburg Seminar; Ann Gralnek, Consultant in Philanthropy; and Simon Turkalj, Executive Coach and Change Management Consultant.

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