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For Immediate Release

June 1, 2004

Cultural Initiatives Holds Graduation Celebration for 9 Santa Clara County School Districts –

Innovative Program Proves Successful in Sustaining High Quality Arts in Elementary Schools

San José, CA – On June 7, 2004, Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley will convene Santa Clara County school district leaders, educators and arts educators, funders, public officials, parents and community stakeholders for its Creative Education Program Celebration. The event celebrates the achievements of districts that have worked in partnership with the nationally recognized Creative Education Program for up to five years, to restore superior arts education in public elementary schools. Those sites completing the Creative Education Program are: Campbell Union School District, Cory School (SJUSD), Farnham School (Cambrian SD), Franklin-McKinley School District, Lakeside Joint Union School District, Los Alamitos School (SJUSD), Los Gatos Union School District, Oak Grove School District, Palo Alto Unified School District, Saratoga Union School District.

In addition, the event will celebrate the significant progress of the Cohort 2 participants: Booksin School (SJUSD), Cambrian School District, Cupertino Union School District, Loma Prieta School (LPJUSD), Los Altos School District, Montebello School, Moreland School District, Mount Pleasant School District, Morgan Hill Unified School District, Santa Clara Unified School District, and Simonds School (SJUSD).

Colleen B. Wilcox, Ph.D., County Superintendent of Schools; Nancy Glaze of The David and Lucile Packard Foundation; and Susan Hammer, Cultural Initiatives Board President and former City of San José Mayor, will speak at the event.

The Creative Education Program (CEP) of Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley has served 17 of the 21 Santa Clara County public elementary school districts, and 4 of 6 unified school districts over the last five years. Since 1999, CEP has awarded over \$3.6 million in school grants and has provided additional technical assistance valued at over \$117,000. Participating school districts joined the Program in two phases: Cohort One grant sites participated from 1999 to 2004, and Cohort Two grant sites have participated since 2001 and will graduate in 2006. The Program reaches 127 elementary schools, serving 65,557 students and 2,877 teachers.

Collectively, the 17 school districts working in partnership with Cultural Initiatives have made significant strides in the development, enhancement, and expansion of arts education programs for K-6 students in Santa Clara County. These educators, administrators and parents of these 17 districts are leaders in building the infrastructure for instruction of the arts as core subjects in the curriculum, as designated by federal and state education policy. Amidst severe budget cuts and other challenges, these districts have sustained and bolstered student learning in and through the arts.

Through their involvement in the CEP, each district has focused on leveraging resources to build capacity appropriate to their district's needs to create positive change in arts

education. Each district has formed an arts task force, adopted State content standards for the visual and performing arts, trained teachers in the new arts curriculum, and developed long-range plans for arts education.

According to Cultural Initiatives' Executive Director, John Kreidler, "The Creative Education Program is proof that the long decline of arts education in California's public schools can be reversed. Our children deserve no less than to receive a creative component of their early education that complements and enhances their engagement in other core subjects including language, social studies, science and mathematics."

The Creative Education Program, launched in 1999, initiates and supports programs that enable Santa Clara County public elementary schools to provide every student with consistent, sequential, standards-based arts education. The program offers a flexible, comprehensive approach to improving and expanding elementary school arts education through six program components: school grants, technical assistance, professional development, leadership and networking events, program evaluation, and advocacy. Santa Clara County Superintendent Colleen B. Wilcox, Ph.D. recognizes the contribution of the Creative Education Program: "The Creative Education Program — the only initiative of its kind in the nation — dramatically expands the capacity of public elementary school districts to provide high-quality, standards-based arts education as part of the core curriculum."

The CEP has proven to be a catalyst for a vibrant community. After only a few years, districts funded by the program are demonstrating promising results. An external program evaluation conducted by American Institute for Research from 2001-2003 revealed positive effects on participating schools, teachers and districts.

Among the key findings of the program evaluation, 74% of surveyed classroom teachers in participating districts provided arts lessons to their students. District administrators, teachers, and arts educators saw significant gains in the quality of arts instruction provided (sequential, standards-based instruction), as well as significant improvement in students' knowledge, skills, and confidence in the arts including public performances. Overall, schools with stronger arts education infrastructure (a focus of the CEP's systemic approach) reported better student and teacher outcomes.

County Superintendent Dr. Wilcox affirms the value of the arts in education: "The arts are essential in the cognitive, affective, and social development of children. Not only do the arts provide opportunities for school engagement to a broader range of students, they also promote creativity, confidence, empathy, leadership, and collaboration."

The Creative Education Program is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and major contributors include The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Cisco Systems Foundation, The Morgan Family Foundation, The Hearst Foundation, Steve and Anita Westly Foundation, Hewlett-Packard Company, Compton Foundation, Sobrato Family Foundation, Adobe Systems, Community Foundation Silicon Valley, Bill and Marie Bianco, Applied Materials Foundation, The Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation, Cadence Design Systems, and The Morris Stulsaft 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 vitality of Silicon Valley. The *20/21 Regional Cultural Plan for the New Millennium* serves as a blueprint for encouraging participation and fostering innovation in the cultural life of our community; the plan champions arts education as a fundamental component in igniting community-wide engagement. The organization's 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 Cultural Initiatives Board of Directors 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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Editors please note: this is an invitation-only event. However, we welcome visits from the press to the event. The event takes place on June 7, 2004 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Campbell Community Center, One West Campbell Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008.