



The Isabel Allende Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL: October 2, 2005

CONTACT: Lori Barra, *Executive Director*

lori@isabelallendefoundation.org

415.289.0992

Isabel Allende Foundation Announces 2005 Espiritu Awards

Best-Selling Author Honors Four Bay Area Nonprofits

2005 Winners: www.isabelallendefoundation.org/english/espiritu_awards.html

SAUSALITO, CA, October 2 — Acclaimed author Isabel Allende today announced the recipients of her Foundation's 2005 Espiritu Awards. This follows an international book tour for her most recent books, *Zorro* and *Forest of the Pygmies*. Four nonprofit groups located in the San Francisco Bay Area will be honored with grants of \$12,500 each.

Isabel Allende established her foundation in December 1996 to pay tribute to her deceased daughter, Paula. "It is in giving that I connect with others, that my life has meaning, and that I can feel Paula's spirit present in the world," she says.

In 2001, Isabel created the Espiritu Awards to bring attention to and financially support nonprofits working in the areas of empowerment and protection of women and children.

The 2005 Espiritu Award recipients are:

- **Center for Young Women's Development** (www.cywd.org)
- **GirlSource** (www.girlsource.org)
- **Homeless Prenatal Program** (www.homelessprenatal.org)
- **Legal Services for Children** (www.lsc-sf.org)

Speaking of her 2005 grantees Allende says, "What we do is nothing compared to what the women and children these agencies serve do to better their own lives. Their stories are so moving."

The awards will be presented on October 2, 2005 at a women's circle facilitated by renowned teacher and author, Jean Shinoda Bolen, whose book, *The Millionth Circle*, has been the inspiration for women's circles worldwide. Her most recent book, *Urgent Message from Mother*, was published in September, 2005. More information about Isabel Allende and the foundation can be found at www.isabelallende.com and www.isabelallendefoundation.org.

/...more

The Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD) provides opportunities for high-risk, low- and no-income young women to build healthier lives and communities.

SAYS ALLENDE: "Never underestimate the power of a young woman who is given education, resources, support and respect. She will accomplish things we cannot even dream."

In 1997, CYWD became one of the nation's first youth-run social service organizations when the young women served by the organization assumed responsibility for its direction and operations. CYWD offers direct services to girls, educational resources for policy makers and others, and advocacy for once marginalized young women of color. Run by and for the young women it serves, many of whom are coming out of the juvenile justice system, CYWD is widely respected as a new model for youth development, advocacy and training.

CONTACT: www.cywd.org

GirlSource provides education, employment and leadership opportunities for low-income, high-school-age girls in San Francisco.

SAYS ALLENDE: "Even the most well cared for girl has a complicated journey through adolescence. To start that journey abused, neglected and without basic resources is a terrible hardship. GirlSource helps girls find their voice, access resources and fulfill their dreams of going to college."

Founded in 1998, GirlSource believes that low-income teenage girls must receive continual, personalized support throughout their high school years if their lives are to be improved. The agency encourages girls to participate in different GirlSource programs and advance to positions of responsibility within the organization. Many former participants have been hired as peer educators to assist other teens from their own neighborhoods or backgrounds. Paid job programs include technology, community leadership, and speakers bureau training, supplemented by individual guidance and workshops to help girls finish high school, go on to college, and launch their careers.

CONTACT: www.girlsource.org

Homeless Prenatal Program cares for and supports homeless parents and pregnant women in order to ensure healthy birth outcomes and enhance the quality of life for each woman and her family.

SAYS ALLENDE: "Healthy, joyful pregnancies and childbirth are too often the privilege of the wealthy. Homeless Prenatal Program brings love and a sense of community to daughters and sisters whose own families are unable to care for them. No one is ever sent away without being seen. Over ninety percent of its pregnant clients deliver normal birth weight babies; ninety-five percent of these babies are also born drug-free. How could we not support them?"

Founded in 1989, Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP) offers perinatal care, counseling and advocacy, housing referrals, legal aid, and more. Most importantly, HPP provides a nonjudgmental and unconditionally supportive environment where homeless women can rebuild their confidence and their lives. By hiring and training formerly homeless women as community health workers for outreach and case management, HPP makes a real and caring connection with its clients.

CONTACT: www.homelessprenatal.org

Legal Services for Children offers free legal and social work services to children and youth in order to stabilize their lives and help them reach their full potential.

SAYS ALLENDE: “Did you know that immigrant and refugee children as young as four years old can be incarcerated and separated from their families? These children are fleeing war, famine, poverty and persecution. We support Legal Services for Children with the hope of helping even one child win freedom.”

Founded in 1975, Legal Services for Children (LSC) is one of the first non-profit law firms in the country dedicated to advancing the rights of youth. It provides legal representation and social work services to ensure that every child in the San Francisco Bay Area has an opportunity to be raised in a safe environment with access to education and health care. The agency’s holistic services are provided to children and youth in cases that include legal guardianship, dependency, school discipline, immigration, and emancipation.

CONTACT: www.lsc-sf.org