



The Isabel Allende Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL: September 12, 2004

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Isabel Allende Foundation Announces Espiritu Awards

Best-Selling Author Honors Seven Bay Area Nonprofits

2004 Winners: www.isabelallendefoundation.org/english/espiritu_awards.html

SAUSALITO, CA, SEPTEMBER 12—Isabel Allende, internationally acclaimed author, today announced the recipients of the Isabel Allende Foundation's 2004 Espiritu Awards. The announcement follows a six-month international book tour for Allende's most recent book, *The Kingdom of the Golden Dragon*. Seven nonprofit groups, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, will be honored with grants of \$10,000 each for their work.

In 2001, the Isabel Allende Foundation established the Espiritu Awards to celebrate and financially support nonprofits working in the areas of literacy, education, the protection of women and children, health, and the pursuit of peace.

"Each of this year's Espiritu award winners improved the lives of under-served women and children," says Allende.

"The nation's economic downturn has been especially difficult for low income women and children and the grassroots nonprofits who serve them. We are honored to bring attention to these groups and to contribute to their success."

The 2004 Espiritu Award recipients are:

- PROTECTION OF CHILDREN: **Home Away from Homelessness** (www.homeaway.org) and **Novato Youth Center** for its **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program** (www.novatoyouthcenter.org)
- HEALTH: **Shanti** for **Lifelines** (www.shanti.org)
- EDUCATION: **Girls Inc.** for **Latinas Y Que** (www.girlsinc.org) and **Jamestown Community Center** (www.jamestownsf.org)
- EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: **C.E.O. Women** (www.ceowomen.org) and **Women's Initiative for Self Employment** (www.womensinitiative.org)

Isabel Allende established her foundation in December 1996 to pay tribute to her deceased daughter, Paula. Says Allende, "My daughter taught me the two mottos by which my life and foundation are led. 'We only have what we give' and 'When in doubt ask yourself the question, What is the most generous thing to do in this case?'"

The awards are being given on September 12, 2004. More information about Isabel Allende and the Foundation can be found at www.isabelallende.com and www.isabelallendefoundation.org.

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The Espiritu Award for the Protection of Children is presented to **A Home Away from Homelessness** to support its efforts to break the cycle of homelessness and transform lives, one child at a time.

SAYS ALLENDE: “The average age of a homeless person is nine years old and there are 4,000 homeless children in San Francisco alone. The resilience it takes to survive as a homeless child is unfathomable—from moving an average of five times a year, to waiting months for a space in an emergency shelter, to sleeping in a car, under a freeway or on the street. A Home Away from Homelessness provides respite, education, dignity and love to children who have very little opportunity to experience childhood. I wish every homeless child could feel the safe and loving embrace of such a caring community.”

Compared even to low- or no-income children with housing, homeless children experience worse health, as well as greater developmental delays, anxiety, depression, and lower educational achievement; nearly seventy percent of these children also suffer from chronic illnesses. A Home Away from Homelessness (A Home Away) was founded in 1994 as a respite program for shelter-based children with little or no access to play space and the burden of responsibilities beyond their age. A Home Away’s more than 100 volunteers and mentors donate 600 hours per month of direct service to creating an abundance of recreational, educational and social opportunities. What began as an impulse of the heart now annually fosters the strengths, creativity and abilities of 450 children and their families.

CONTACT: www.homeaway.org

The Espiritu Award for the Protection of Children is also presented to **Novato Youth Center** to support its **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program**, which reduces risk of pregnancy and STDs, and increases responsibility among male Latino high school students.

SAYS ALLENDE: “All teens wade through self-esteem and self-discovery issues, but those served by Novato Youth Center have the added burden of language, cultural and economic barriers. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program helps young people make informed decisions about their sexuality, and better cope with the stress and anxiety of becoming more autonomous. Its results are excellent: no pregnancies for any student while participating in the program.”

For 28 years, Novato Youth Center has provided advocacy and services for children and youth. It has promoted their healthy development by protecting, nurturing and educating youth from birth through high school, and offering support and resources to parents and the community. The Center’s bilingual staff works tirelessly to address the language, cultural and financial barriers that otherwise would stand between low income families and the services they need.

CONTACT: www.novatoyouthcenter.org

The Espiritu Award for Health is presented to **Shanti** in support of its **LifeLines** program, which provides a route to comprehensive health care for low income, uninsured and underinsured women with breast cancer.

SAYS ALLENDE: “Internationally renowned for its care for individuals with AIDS, Shanti now offers its peer-to-peer support to women with breast cancer. Through LifeLines, these women receive help obtaining food and shelter, and they receive the compassionate contact they need to focus on their recovery. This work is vital and visionary.”

LifeLines was created in 2001 through a collaboration of The Breast Cancer Fund and Shanti, a pioneering San Francisco-based nonprofit founded in 1974. Shanti specializes in providing services and expert assistance to individuals living with life-threatening illnesses. LifeLines increases the quality of life for at-risk women with breast cancer by providing access to better care and treatment, as well as crucial services such as transportation, meals and peer support.

CONTACT: www.shanti.org

The Espiritu Award for Education is presented to **Girls Incorporated of Alameda County** to support **Latinas Y Que**—a program that empowers young Latina women by providing leadership opportunities, ensuring their voices are heard, acknowledging their strengths, and energizing them with pride in Latino culture.

SAYS ALLENDE: “*Mira! Latinas Y Que* is turning cultural discrimination on its head! Created by and for girls, *Latinas Y Que* provides opportunities for Latinas to stand out rather than simply “fit in.” *iPor fin!*”

Girls, Inc. of Alameda County has developed a range of programs to provide middle school and high school girls with the tools and skills they need to be strong, smart and bold. Since 1993, its specialized program *Latinas Y Que* has empowered young Latina women in Alameda County to become community leaders and expand their visions of what they can achieve. *Latinas Y Que* promotes leadership and community service, college and career development, health and sexuality awareness, and outdoor sports and adventure. The bilingual program is open to 30 high school girls and meets weekly. *Latinas Y Que*'s first class of graduates, many of whom are now successful career women, just gathered to commemorate the program's first decade of success.

CONTACT: www.girlsinc-alameda.org

The Espiritu Award for Education is also presented to **Jamestown Community Center** to support its community-based academic and recreational programs for youth in San Francisco's Mission District.

SAYS ALLENDE: “I love that Jamestown exists at the very heart of its community. Supported by neighborhood volunteers and past participants, it is a fun, safe, and inclusive place for young people to gather, learn and thrive. Wonderful things can happen when a community dedicates its vision, resources and unwavering commitment to the welfare of its children.”

Since 1971, Jamestown Community Center has provided learning opportunities and safe spaces for neighborhood youth. Each year, Jamestown offers a range of after-school, summer education and recreation programs to approximately 500 eight- to eighteen-year-old children. These programs include intensive individual tutoring as well as classes in art, theater, dance, creative writing, youth organizing, martial arts and science. Jamestown also organizes summer leadership development and arts programs, sports, drop-in recreation, and workshops and social events for parents.

CONTACT: www.jamestownsfs.org

The Espiritu Award for Empowerment of Women is presented to **C.E.O. Women** in recognition of its micro-enterprise program benefiting low income immigrant and refugee women in Oakland.

SAYS ALLENDE: “I know from personal experience how difficult it is to be an immigrant, especially at the beginning. C.E.O. Women helps recent immigrants acquire English literacy, as well as the basic business skills they need to succeed, not simply survive. With each woman it assists, this visionary program improves the quality of life for her children, her family and the whole community.”

C.E.O. Women was founded in 2000 by the daughter of Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants. She launched the organization with \$1,000 and the conviction that she could make a difference. The mission of C.E.O. Women is to transform the lives of low income immigrant and refugee women in the San Francisco Bay Area by helping them become economically self-sufficient, integrated members of society. Underlying this mission is the belief that every woman has skills, abilities and energy which, when combined with opportunity, can produce economic value. Since its inception, C.E.O. Women has served over 150 clients. Many students in the program test market their ideas first through the “Shine Your Brilliance” learning lab, where they receive individual coaching from businesswomen in the community. In the 2003-2004 graduating class, fifty percent of the graduates successfully started a small business.

CONTACT: www.ceowomen.org

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The Espiritu Award for Empowerment of Women is also presented to **Women's Initiative for Self Employment** for helping women obtain the skills, self-confidence and experience needed to start small businesses and to ultimately leave behind low income subsistence

SAYS ALLENDE: "Women's Initiative for Self Employment has a big vision for women starting small businesses. On the surface these businesses offer services such as house cleaning, food preparation or sewing. But look just a little deeper and you can see that they are really providing self-esteem, dignity and the privilege of being a respected member of one's community."

Women's Initiative for Self Employment has already offered a wealth of essential services to more than 11,500 women, including one-on-one mentoring, peer support and loan assistance. In just 12 years, 4,800 women have received training and/or technical assistance, and 750 women have started or expanded a small business. In addition, 196 loans, totaling nearly \$700,000 have been disbursed, and more than \$1,000,000 in capital from other lending sources has been directed to Women's Initiative clients. Follow-up studies by the organization show that the average annual income of participants nearly doubles within 18 months following participation in business management training.

CONTACT: www.womensinitiative.org