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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Kids in Need of Defense Receives 2015 Espiritu Award from Isabel Allende Foundation**

SAUSALITO, Calif., May 29, 2015 – Internationally acclaimed author Isabel Allende announced today that Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) is this year’s recipient of her foundation’s annual Espiritu Award. KIND, a nonprofit that provides pro bono legal representation to children who come to the United States without a parent or legal guardian, will receive a grant of \$80,000.

In 2014, nearly 68,000 children traveling alone came to the United States. The humanitarian crisis of increasing numbers of Central American children arriving at our border has now become a due process crisis, with thousands of children at risk of being returned to great harm, even death. Many of these children are fleeing gang and other forms of violence in their home countries, violence from which their governments are unable to protect them. More than 70 percent go through their deportation proceedings in the U.S. without an attorney. KIND partners with more than 270 law firms, corporations, law schools and bar associations to provide lifesaving representation to these children.

“It is unconscionable that in this country unaccompanied children crossing the border are left to fend for themselves in complex deportation proceedings they cannot even understand,” says Allende. “Unlike any accused criminal in the United States, migrant children are not entitled to court-appointed attorneys. That is why KIND’s work is so important. With their help, thousands of these kids will have a chance for safety and a better life in our country.”

“Many of the children we serve are traumatized by their experiences in their home countries and by their journey to the U.S.,” says KIND President Wendy Young. “The thousands of attorneys who have volunteered with KIND have proven that many of these children are eligible for U.S. protection. Without an attorney, however, they would not have been able to present their case in immigration court and could have been returned to grave harm. This grant will enable us to train more attorneys and represent more children. We could not be more grateful.”

**About the Isabel Allende Foundation**

Founded in 1996 in honor of the author’s daughter, who died at age 28, the Isabel Allende Foundation provides support to select nonprofits providing women and girls protection from violence, education, healthcare and reproductive self-determination.

For more information about the Isabel Allende Foundation, visit [www.isabelallendefoundation.org](http://www.isabelallendefoundation.org).

Additional information about Isabel Allende can be found at [www.isabelallende.com](http://www.isabelallende.com).

To learn more about Kids in Need of Defense, visit [www.supportkind.org](http://www.supportkind.org).