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Arts Council Silicon Valley Presents 2009 ArtsConnect Program Exhibition "Art Empowers" Exhibition to Showcase Artistic Work of Local At-Risk Youth

At the de Saisset Museum, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California
Exhibition: May 8 – June 28, 2009
Public Reception: May 8, 2009, 10:00AM-12:00PM

San Jose, CA, April 15, 2009 – The artistic talents of more than 50 local at-risk youth ages 12 through 18 will be showcased in a dynamic exhibition "Arts Empowers" at Santa Clara University's de Saisset Museum from May 28 – June 28, 2009. The "Art Empowers" exhibition showcases artwork created by youth participating in the ArtsConnect program, a collaboration between Arts Council Silicon Valley and the Alternative Schools Department of the Santa Clara County Office of Education. Now in its 20th year, the ArtsConnect program, shares the talents of Bay Area-based visual and performing artists with at-risk youth through short and long-term artist residencies and arts in education programs. A reception honoring the young artists will be held at the de Saisset Museum on May 8, 2009, from 10:00am – 12:00 noon. The reception is open to the public and admission is free for both the reception and exhibition. For general information on the de Saisset Museum and exhibition hours go to www.scu.edu/deSaisset/ or call 408.554.4528.

Students participating in this year's ArtsConnect program attend the following alternative schools in Santa Clara County including: Advent School (boys and girls); Alternative Placement Academy; Blue Ridge High School, Foundry Community School, Muriel Wright School, Osborne School, Ridgemont School, Santa Community School, South County Community School; and, Tera Bella Academy.

This year's professional teaching artists include: Wilfred Mark, music; Gertrud Turner, visual arts; Craig Ward, music; Mark Engel, visual arts; Olga Loya, visual arts, storytelling; Lori Kay, visual arts; Susan Taylor Brown, literature/poetry; Judy Gittelsohn, visual arts; Frances Marin, visual arts; Chike Nwoffiah, media; Tumani Onabiyi, music.

"For 20 years the ArtsConnect program has harnessed the power of the arts to positively impact the lives of countless at-risk youth in our region," said Mitsu Kumagai, the Arts Council's youth program manager and former Assistant County Superintendent of Schools for the Santa Clara County Office of Education. "Through this program we have found that the arts allow students to not only better access their creativity, but have witnessed the enhancement in their intellectual, social and emotional development as well."

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ABOUT THE ARTSCONNECT PROGRAM

Created in 1989, the *ArtsConnect* arts education program is one of Arts Council Silicon Valley's most popular and influential programs. The program provides year-round arts instruction through comprehensive artist residencies for at-risk youth between the ages of 12 and 18. Now the largest provider of arts education for at-risk youth in the region, on average the program reaches more than 600 individuals each year, nearly 15,000 throughout its history.

ArtsConnect engages at-risk youth and special needs populations through a number of different types of arts disciplines. Included are music, drama, visual arts (painting, drawing, writing, mosaic, and sculpture), and dance. Each discipline has its own significant and unique affect on those who participate and are all important for students in California public schools because it promotes learning, creativity, skills, and knowledge in the visual and performing arts.

The program continues to successfully help teens and challenged adults access their creativity and transform it into a positive outlet for healing and expression, reduce truancy and improve academic performance, divert youth from gangs, drugs and the juvenile justice system, employ individual artists, and open the doors for potential future employment in the arts (In California, 1 in 5 students works in the creative industry). For more information regarding the *ArtsConnect* program, visit: www.artscouncil.org/grants/programs/artscconnect.asp

ARTSCONNECT SUPPORT

This year's ArtsConnect program is funded in part by Citibank, Morgan Family Foundation, QUALCOMM, Rotary Club of San Jose, Santa Clara County Office of Education and Target Corporation.

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ABOUT ARTS COUNCIL SILICON VALLEY

Arts Council Silicon Valley is an independent, nonprofit arts agency dedicated to providing funding, advocacy support, and marketing services to the region's arts organizations and artists. As the official state/local partner with the California Arts Council, the County of Santa Clara, and the National Endowment for the Arts, Arts Council Silicon Valley is the largest nonprofit arts council in the state. Since the organization's inception in 1982, the Arts Council has provided nearly \$24 million in grants and services to local arts and cultural organizations, individual artists, schools, and community groups. For more information on Arts Council Silicon Valley go to: www.artscouncil.org