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**ACADEMY OF FRIENDS PLEDGES \$450,000 TO HIV/AIDS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

*Twenty-ninth Annual Gala Continues to Deliver Consistent HIV/AIDS Funding Despite a Challenging Economy*

**SAN FRANCISCO, California -- September 30, 2008 --** Academy of Friends (AoF) today announced grant funding for its 2008-2009 beneficiary organizations. Totaling \$450,000 raised from major corporations and hundreds of underwriters, the annual grants will be distributed to twelve HIV/AIDS service organizations in San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Sonoma counties. The beneficiary recipients provide critical HIV/AIDS prevention, counseling, health, and nutritional services to various ethnic, gender and age groups to stop the spread of HIV.

“As we begin our 29th year, Academy of Friends is committed to supporting our 2008-2009 beneficiary partners on the front lines fighting HIV,” said Mike Horak, Executive Director of Academy of Friends. “Given the current economic climate, we’re energized that our corporate and individual underwriters are unwavering to support these partners.”

The 2008-2009 beneficiary organizations include:

**AIDS Emergency Fund - San Francisco**

Provides short-term financial assistance to help people disabled by HIV/AIDS to cover basic human needs and stabilize their living situations.

**AIDS Health Project - San Francisco**

Provides culturally sensitive counseling and education to stop the spread of HIV infection, and to help people face the emotional, psychological and social challenges of living with HIV/AIDS.

**AIDS Research Institute at UCSF - San Francisco**

Seeks to enhance special medical care focused on the needs of people with HIV/AIDS over 50 years of age.

**Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland** - *East Bay Counties*

Serves HIV-infected infants, children and adolescents, providing medical care and comprehensive psychosocial case management services for the children and their families.

**Food for Thought** - *Sonoma County*

Provides free weekly groceries, household items, supplements, vitamins, along with frozen meals for people severely affected by HIV/AIDS.

**Larkin Street Youth Services** - *San Francisco*

Provides HIV services for homeless and runaway youth including housing, medical care, mental health/psychiatric care, HIV/AIDS prevention, education, testing and counseling.

**Mission Neighborhood Health Services** - *San Francisco*

A community-based health service center that provides a continuum of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services for the Latino community, particularly monolingual Spanish-speaking clients.

**New Conservatory Theater** - *Bay Area Counties*

NCTC's YouthAware Educational Theatre program educates young people about HIV/AIDS through a unique theater-in-education model examining the social behaviors and situations that lead to infection.

**PAWS, Pets are Wonderful Support** - *San Francisco*

Provides for the comprehensive needs of companion animals for low-income persons with HIV/AIDS and other disabling illnesses.

**Positive Resource Center** - *San Francisco*

Provides comprehensive benefits counseling and employment services to people living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS.

**Project Open Hand** - *San Francisco and Alameda Counties*

Provides meals and groceries for people living with HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, the homebound, critically ill and seniors.

**The Health Trust** - *Santa Clara County*

The Health Trust AIDS Services is the largest program for HIV/AIDS effected individuals in Santa Clara County, providing case management, housing assistance, food, education and a community center.

“We’re proud of our successful 29-year and \$7M fundraising track-record benefitting HIV/AIDS service organizations,” said Doug Piper, Chairman of Academy of Friends. “While this year’s economy has been severely challenging, we are confident that our individual and corporate donors will remain committed to helping us meet and exceed AoF’s fundraising goals this year.”

**About Academy of Friends**

Since 1980, Academy of Friends annually produces the world’s premier Academy Awards Night Charity Gala as the centerpiece of its efforts to raise funds, award donations, and encourage volunteerism that benefit a diverse set of HIV/AIDS direct care and prevention education agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area. Since its founding, AoF has given over \$7 million to 61 HIV/AIDS service organizations and will continue its work until the pandemic has passed. The 29th Annual Gala will be held on February 22, 2009 at Fort Mason, San Francisco.

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