



For Immediate Release

**15 HIV/AIDS AGENCIES SELECTED AS 2007 BENEFICIARIES
MERCEDES-BENZ USA, LEVI STRAUSS & McCANN WORLDGROUP
TO SERVE AS LEAD PRESENTING SPONSORS
2007 GALA SET FOR SUNDAY, FEB. 25, FT. MASON CENTER HERBST PAVILION**

Celebrating Life. Empowering Hope.

Academy of Friends: 415/995-9890 or www.AcademyOfFriends.org

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 28, 2006—**Academy of Friends** (AOF) today announced the selection of 15 HIV/AIDS agencies from six Bay Area counties as the beneficiaries of \$500,000 to be raised during the current 2006/07 fundraising campaign. This year's selection of service organizations, which reflects an increase over last season's roster of 13 beneficiaries, includes for the first time an innovative multi-year grant to one agency in particular. Academy of Friends remains one of the leading contributors to the Bay Area's frontline battle against HIV and AIDS, and has thus far distributed \$6 million to multiple agencies.

In a related announcement, AOF acknowledged corporate industry leaders **Mercedes-Benz USA, Levi Strauss & Co.,** and **McCann Worldgroup** have graciously agreed to continue their pivotal role as Presenting Sponsors of the 27th Annual Academy of Friends Gala, scheduled for the night of the Hollywood Oscar telecast on Sunday, Feb. 25, 2007. Joining this impressive trio of corporate benefactors, AOF announced the renewed commitment and generosity of Major Sponsors **Starbucks, Triton Funding Group, Hartle Media Group,** and **Diageo.** The 2007 black-tie Gala will be held at Fort Mason Center's Herbst Pavilion and adjoining Cowell Theater.

Addressing over 200 VIP underwriters and guests at a special cocktail reception hosted by the **Clift,** AOF Board Chair **Alan Keith** commented, "I am very proud of AOF's commitment to support a growing need for funding in our community. We have set our sights on raising money for a record number of 15 HIV/AIDS agencies from six counties, including a new, multi-year innovation grant with AIDS Legal Referral Panel. This innovation grant is designed to address organizational development and sustainability issues faced by the agencies serving our community in an era of critical financial challenges. It is our belief that our pledge will serve as a catalyst for change and will stimulate additional funding to this vital legal service provider."

In response to this selection of new AOF beneficiaries, Deputy Director for Programs & Services at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation **Steve Tierney** commented, "The commitment of Academy of Friends to both provide on-going support and ability to widen their outreach is truly impressive. I am particularly encouraged by AOF's ability to stimulate financial support from hundreds of individuals who may not otherwise be significantly engaged with regional HIV/AIDS organizations."

AND, the 2007 Academy of Friends Gala Awards will go to:

AIDS Emergency Fund; AIDS Legal Referral Panel; Food For Thought – Sonoma County AIDS Food Bank; The Health Trust; Huckleberry Youth Program; Lyon-Martin Women's Health Services; Magnet; Marin AIDS Project; New Conservatory Theatre Center; Pacific Center for Human Growth; Positive Health Program; Positive Resource Center; Project Open Hand; San Mateo County AIDS Program; and STOP AIDS Project. (A complete agency description is attached.)

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Building on the success of the recent 26th annual Gala in March which raised \$500,000 for grants and awards, AOF continues to drive fundraising momentum for HIV and AIDS community services in the Bay Area expanding – for the first time – to six counties. The 15 beneficiaries were selected with the grateful assistance of an esteemed panel of HIV/AIDS community advisors, reflecting an effort by AOF to reach both new and familiar populations where HIV infections continue to rise, specifically among women, people of color, youth and men who are engaged in the use of methamphetamine (crystal meth).

Academy of Friends provides two categories of grants to support organizations delivering a broad range of community services. The first is Direct Care Grants, such as food, housing, counseling, financial assistance, or legal services. The second is HIV Prevention Education Grants, which include funding for HIV & AIDS education, such as primary prevention, treatment or nutrition information, employment and job retraining, and peer education/outreach. In addition to the designated \$500,000 for the beneficiaries, AOF will once again provide additional grants throughout the fiscal year, including the AOF Founder's Award and the holiday-time grant, Geoffrey Etienne-Giacomazzi Charities Fund.

AOF's beneficiaries are partners in the non-profit's fundraising and this year were selected from 28 local agencies that submitted proposals, requesting a total of more than \$1 million in much needed support. Corporate sponsors and individual underwriters who donate through AOF, benefit from the ability to "give once" and reach many of the agencies working to improve the lives of those at risk. Last year alone, AOF was able to provide financial support that reached approximately 200,000 individuals.

"We could not continue to help these agencies deliver the good work they do without the collaboration and support of our outstanding Presenting Sponsors, our many Major Sponsors, underwriters and volunteers," said Alan Keith. "We are off to an excellent start and look forward to another action-packed fundraising campaign and memorable Gala event."

For the fifth consecutive year, Mercedes-Benz USA will provide Academy of Friends with a luxury car to be used in a raffle. Beginning Sunday, Oct. 1 at the Castro Street Fair, AOF will launch an aggressive five-month campaign to sell 3,000 raffle tickets at \$50 each. This season's car is the sporty, two-seater 2007 Mercedes-Benz SLK280 Roadster, and is valued at \$45,000. The winning raffle ticket will be selected the night of the Academy of Friends Gala on Feb. 25, 2007.

Academy of Friends was founded in 1980 as a small, private Academy Awards® night party shared by 25 friends over a little food, champagne and Hollywood glamour. This annual gathering soon formalized itself into a gala party with the expressed mission of raising revenue and awareness of the scourge of HIV and AIDS affecting the greater San Francisco community. During the ensuing 26 years, Academy of Friends has become acclaimed nationwide for producing one of the biggest and best formal attire Academy Awards® parties outside of Los Angeles, all done with the express purpose of **Celebrating Life and Empowering Hope**.

To become a 2007 underwriter, corporate sponsor, learn more about this year's Mercedes-Benz raffle, or simply to volunteer, please call 415/995 9890 or visit www.AcademyOfFriends.org.

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Press Contact: Jon Finck, AOF PR Chair

415/577 1323 or jpf@encore-sf.com

THE 2007 ACADEMY OF FRIENDS GALA AWARDS WILL GO TO:

- **AIDS EMERGENCY FUND;** www.aidsemergencyfund.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to provide direct assistance to low-income HIV residents in danger of losing housing, with a particular focus on the Tenderloin/Bay View districts;
- **AIDS LEGAL REFERRAL PANEL;** www.arlp.org (San Francisco); a two-year grant for 2007 and 2008 to provide seed money for ALRP's new HIV/AIDS Insurance Protection Project by funding 50% of expenses of in-house attorney work directly with clients at risk of losing insurance benefits & funding;
- **FOOD FOR THOUGHT – SONOMA COUNTY AIDS FOOD BANK;** www.ffifoodbank.org (Sonoma); a one year grant to support on-going food programs and services for low-income residents in Sonoma County;
- **THE HEALTH TRUST;** www.healthtrust.org (Santa Clara); a one year grant to provide case management and direct care services to multi-ethnic clients in Santa Clara County;
- **HUCKLEBERRY YOUTH PROGRAM;** www.huckleberryyouth.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to provide prevention and education services to multi-ethnic youth via peer-to-peer programs;
- **LYON-MARTIN WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES;** www.lyon-martin.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to provide case management, testing, and direct care services to women and trans-gender residents;
- **MAGNET;** www.magnetsf.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to provide rapid "RNA" testing on-site at the Castro District location;
- **MARIN AIDS PROJECT;** www.marinaidsproject.org (Marin); a one year grant to provide case management, mental health services, and substance abuse awareness among low-income residents in Marin County;
- **NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER;** www.nctcsf.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to provide HIV education and prevention services through the YouthAware program's innovative theater performances, workshops and critical discussions aimed at Bay Area youth;
- **PACIFIC CENTER FOR HUMAN GROWTH;** www.pacificcenter.org (Alameda); a one year grant to provide case management and substance abuse services to men of color in Alameda County;
- **POSITIVE HEALTH PROGRAM;** www.php.ucsf.edu (San Francisco); a one year grant to provide direct care, case management services to minority and low-income residents through Ward 86 at SF General Hospital;
- **POSITIVE RESOURCE CENTER;** www.positiveresource.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to provide case management and employment aid to low-income residents with HIV;
- **PROJECT OPEN HAND;** www.openhand.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to support on-going food services and nutritional programs for low-income and homeless HIV individuals;
- **SAN MATEO COUNTY AIDS PROGRAM;** www.smhealth.org (San Mateo); a one year grant to provide direct care, prevention and case management to low-income residents in San Mateo County with particular focus on the emerging Latino HIV population;

- **STOP AIDS PROJECT;** www.stopaids.org (San Francisco); a one year grant to augment on-going health education, risk reduction and prevention outreach programs to San Francisco residents.