



Contacts:

Laura Bradley Davis
Peninsula Community Foundation

650.581.4368, lbDavis@pcf.org

Carol Schuler
Haberma & Associates, Inc.

612.372.6451
carol@modernstorytellers.com

**RAISING A READER HONORED AMONG NATION'S TOP SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS
IN THE 2006 FAST COMPANY/MONITOR GROUP SOCIAL CAPITALIST AWARDS**

Selected for applying innovative strategies and business acumen to foster early literacy, Raising A Reader to appear in Fast Company's January 2006 issue

Dec. 8, 2005, San Mateo, California— Raising A Reader, the award-winning early literacy program developed by Peninsula Community Foundation, is among the 25 winners of the 2006 *Fast Company*/Monitor Group Social Capitalist Awards.

The Social Capitalist Awards honor nonprofit “social entrepreneurs” who combine creativity and ingenuity with business solutions to address the most challenging social problems today, ranging from poor healthcare in developing nations to unequal education access, homelessness, unemployment and substance abuse in the United States. Raising A Reader is the youngest organization to receive this prestigious national award in 2006. Raising A Reader and the other 24 award winners will be featured in the January 2006 issue of *Fast Company*, appearing on newsstands on December 27. (see p. 3 for complete list of winners)

Raising A Reader fosters healthy brain development, parent-child bonding and early literacy skills critical for kindergarten success by engaging parents in a daily read-aloud routine with their children from birth to age five. Through a child-driven process, Raising A Reader rotates bright red bags filled with the highest quality age-appropriate books into low-income homes each week. The book rotation, combined with research-based training and a strong connection to the local library, inspires even low-literate and non-English-speaking families to establish "book cuddling" routines with their little ones, leading to a love of books that lasts a lifetime.

Launched in 1999, Raising A Reader now reaches over 56,000 children annually in 80 communities across 27 states and 4 countries including Mexico, Botswana and Malaysia. Research shows that the program is having a significant impact in a wide variety of settings, including Head Start preschools, family childcare homes, health home-visiting programs, and adult English Language Learner classes. Head Start children using Raising A Reader tested at least twice as high as the national average for book knowledge and reading comprehension. Parents in the program have shown a 471% increase in the time spent sharing stories with their children, and Spanish-speaking families increased their visits to the public library by a staggering 337%.

“Raising A Reader addresses a national crisis in this country, where one in three children enters kindergarten lacking basic pre-reading skills,” said Carol Welsh Gray, President of Raising a Reader. “We are thrilled that Raising A Reader’s methodology and impact are being

recognized by *Fast Company*, a magazine known for profiling successful models of entrepreneurship and innovation.”

Rigorous Evaluation

Raising A Reader was chosen from a field of 240 Social Capitalist Award nominees. Of the 240 nominees, 125 agreed to participate in an evaluation process, which required them to submit two years of audited financials, tax filings and online surveys and to participate in a 90-minute interview with the nomination board.

Raising A Reader will be recognized at a ceremony in New York City on Thurs., Jan. 12, 2006. This year, The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, started by Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, will pick a winner from the Social Capitalists list to receive a free trip to Davos and join its network of global social entrepreneurs.

Investor’s Guide to Giving

“We applaud the efforts and business acumen of Raising A Reader, which is not just a do-gooder dedicated to solving the early literacy gap among at-risk children—it is a business-oriented organization of vision worthy of imitation in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors,” said Mark Vamos, editor of *Fast Company*.

“By approaching social capitalism in a rigorous, data-driven fashion, our evaluation process reveals the truly amazing nature of Raising A Reader—and all of our winners,” Vamos said. “And while rating non-profits is controversial, *Fast Company* thinks it is a necessary step for the sector to grow and improve. Frankly it’s a way to see that these excellent organizations get the recognition they deserve.”

Fast Company partners with the Monitor Group, a global strategy-consulting firm, to select the award winners. Monitor Group created the first methodology to compare nonprofits of different sizes and ages across social sectors. The Monitor Group manages the evaluation process for the awards program and measures each organization’s work in five categories: social impact, entrepreneurship, innovation, aspiration and growth, and sustainability.

“Prior to the Social Capitalist Awards, no ranking process existed to directly compare these kinds or organizations,” said Mark Fuller, chairman and CEO of Monitor Group. “Our evaluation measures the impact and effectiveness of these non-profits, making the Social Capitalist Awards a robust source of guidance for performance-oriented leaders of such organizations, as well as a donor’s guide for those who want their charitable dollars to get the highest ‘social’ return possible.”

About Fast Company and Monitor Group

Fast Company, founded in 1996, is a magazine for and about the creative class. It is a journal of change and changemakers—dynamic, compelling leaders in both the for-profit and non-profit spheres who are making dramatic innovations to shape the future. Visit <http://www.fastcompany.com> for more information. The Monitor Group is a family of professional services firms, linked by shared ownership, management philosophy, and knowledge assets. Each entity in Monitor’s global network is dedicated to providing products and services that fundamentally enhance the competitiveness of its clients. Visit <http://www.monitor.com> for more information.

—more—

The 25 winners of the 2006 Social Capitalist Awards are:

- ACCION International (Boston, Mass.)
- BELL (Dorchester, Mass.)
- Calvert Social Investment Foundation (Bethesda, Md.)
- Citizen Schools (Boston, Mass.)
- City Year (Boston, Mass.)
- College Summit, Inc. (Washington, D.C.)
- First Book (Washington, D.C.)
- Grameen Foundation USA (Washington, D.C.)
- Heifer International (Little Rock, Ark.)
- Housing Partnership Network, Inc. (Boston, Mass.)
- Jumpstart (Boston, Mass.)
- KickStart (San Francisco, Calif.)
- New Community Corp. (Newark, N.J.)
- New Leaders for New Schools (New York, N.Y.)
- PATH (Seattle, Wash.,)
- Pioneer Human Services (Seattle, Wash.)
- **Raising A Reader (Menlo Park, Calif.)**
- Rare (Arlington, Va.)
- Room to Read (San Francisco, Calif.)
- Rubicon Programs Inc. (Richmond, Calif.)
- Teach for America (New York, N.Y.)
- Transfair USA (Oakland, Calif.)
- Unitus (Redmond, Wash.)
- WITNESS (Brooklyn, N.Y.)
- Working Today (Brooklyn, N.Y.)

For more information about Raising A Reader, visit www.pcf.org/raising_reader.

For more information about the Social Capitalists Awards program, visit www.fastcompany.com.

###