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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Bridges to Success Program Receives \$3.9 Million
from First 5 San Mateo County Commission**

San Mateo, CA – On June 28, 2010, the First 5 San Mateo County Commission (F5SMC) approved funding in the amount of \$3,987,716 for the Bridges to Success program. Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Youth and Family Enrichment Services will co-lead Bridges to Success (BTS), a comprehensive, countywide school readiness initiative.

The School Readiness Initiative, launched by First 5 San Mateo County in 2004, has been a multi-year project designed to support children's readiness for school. Over the past six years, First 5 San Mateo County has promoted the readiness of children as they enter the K-12 school system, as well as the preparedness of families, communities and schools to support their transition. Supervisor Rich Gordon, a First 5 San Mateo County Commissioner for nine years and a champion for children and youth stated, "Preparing our children for success in school has long-term benefits for them and for our communities."

Bridges to Success is intended to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors to help eliminate the school readiness gap among children entering Kindergarten. Bridges to Success will provide services to communities in Daly City, Pacifica, Half Moon Bay, Pescadero, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Redwood City, Foster City, San Mateo, and South San Francisco. F5SMC's 2009-2015 Strategic Plan and recommendations from parents and community caregivers were instrumental in determining the major areas of focus for the Bridges to Success program.

After unanimous approval by the First 5 San Mateo County Commission, Erica Wood, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Vice President of Community Leadership, said, "The community foundation is pleased to play a lead role in this effort. Addressing the educational attainment levels of our nation's young people is one of the critical issues of our time. Bridges to Success allows us to create what some experts have called the next social contract for the primary years of education - one that is defined by a more systematic and coordinated approach to early care and education."

Michael Garb, CEO, Youth and Family Enrichment Services, added, "The Bridges to Success program builds on a rich legacy of work in San Mateo County to connect schools, families and communities, and has allowed many more organizations to participate in the process and as a result, the services provided will be much more robust and delivered to more communities."

The Bridges to Success Partners include: San Mateo County Office of Education and the Early Childhood Quality Improvement Project (EQulP), Cabrillo Unified School District, Canada College/San Mateo Community College District, Child Care Coordinating Council, Coyote Point Museum, Daly City Peninsula Partnership Collaborative, Family Connections, Life Steps Foundation Children and Family Services, Pacifica Collaborative, Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, Puente de la Costa Sur, Ravenswood School District, Redwood City 2020, San Mateo Foster City School District, Second Harvest Food Bank, Sobrato Early Learning Academic Program, South San Francisco Unified School District, and Community Gatepath/Watch Me Grow Project.

Since its inception, F5SMC has invested more than \$70 million in local programs serving over 30,700 children prenatally through age five, as well as 17,800 parents and primary caregivers. Currently, F5SMC funds 19 programs through 14 local agencies. For additional information about the Bridges to Success program and First 5 San Mateo County, go to www.first5sanmateo.org.