

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Foundation pledges community support to save art and music programs**

*Pledge to the Arts campaign underway to raise \$140,000 for  
Center and Richmond Street elementary schools*

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., - June 20, 2003 – The El Segundo Educational Foundation has undertaken the ambitious goal of generating \$140,000 in community donations to pay for next year's specialized art and music programs for the two elementary schools in the El Segundo Unified School District (ESUSD).

"Without this generous pledge from the Ed. Foundation, the state's budget crisis would have forced us to cut the art and music programs at Center and Richmond street schools from next year's budget," said Kathleen Wiley, ESUSD school board president. The cuts would have eliminated the specialized art instruction for 1200 kindergarten through fifth grade students in the ESUSD, and one of the district's two elementary music teachers would have been let go.

According to Center Street Elementary School Principal Shannon Wilkins, studies show students who receive regular fine arts instruction beginning at an early age are better all-around students than those who don't. She said through art and music education, younger students develop math, reading, phonetic awareness, spatial relations, music appreciation, and other skills.

"Children who don't have music and art in elementary school don't usually take an interest in fine arts in middle or high school, yet a year of high school fine art is an admission requirement for University of California schools," Wilkins said.

"This is a meaningful time for everyone to support the Foundation, because "Pledge to the Arts!" donations will make a tremendous difference in the education of so many students."

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## Foundation's "Pledge to the Arts!"

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The Foundation's "Pledge to the Arts!" fundraising campaign will require a broad cross section of support from El Segundo's residential and business community if the aggressive goal is to be reached by the target date. The Foundation hopes to raise the money by the end of the calendar year and will need gifts of all sizes to reach the goal.

"Our community is very proud of the well rounded education our students receive in El Segundo schools," said Susan Truax, Center Street parent and Foundation board member. "We've been very fortunate to offer elementary art and music to our students, and it would be a shame for the state's budget crisis to eliminate these wonderful programs. With this pledge by the foundation, we can work together to make a difference for 1200 children. We have faith that people will want to support the Foundation's "Pledge to the Arts!" campaign to save art and music."

The El Segundo Educational Foundation urges the community to make donations today to save El Segundo's elementary art and music programs. Many companies match employee charitable contributions, which is an easy and effective way to double a "Pledge to the Arts!" Donations can be mailed to ESEF, PO Box 591, El Segundo, or dropped off at the District Office, 641 Sheldon Street.

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