

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. Awarded Certificate of Recognition from California State Assembly

Assemblywoman Wilma Chan Praises The Super Stars Literacy Project Benefiting Hoover Elementary, West Oakland, California

LAFAYETTE, CA. – Nov. 2, 2004 – The Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. (JLOEB) received a coveted Certificate of Recognition from the California State Assembly for its signature program, *The Super Stars Literacy Project*. 16th District, Assemblywoman Wilma Chan (D-Oakland) awarded the certificate in recognition of the League's continued efforts and dedication to improving the lives of East Bay children through this project, and to highlight the League's innovative work and powerful voice for *Children at Risk*.

Assemblywoman Chan stated, "I believe it is extremely important to publicly recognize the invaluable service that organizations, like the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, provide to children in the Oakland public schools. Without programs such as *The Super Stars Literacy Project*, many students would miss out on important educational enrichment opportunities."

Shining Stars in West Oakland

Literacy is key to success in school and in society. Studies indicate that children who do not read proficiently by grade three will not graduate from high school, leaving them with limited opportunities in life.¹ Recognizing literacy's crucial role in a child's future, the JLOEB partnered with Hoover Elementary School in West Oakland and launched the *Super Stars Literacy Project (SSLP)*—a comprehensive after-school literacy program designed to make reading fun, and foster the academic and social development of 55 of the lowest performing children in kindergarten through second grades. Older children as well as adult volunteers serve as tutors and mentors. The project generates parent involvement by offering training support services with an emphasis on training parents as literacy volunteers, so that the local community at large can sustain the program after JLOEB is no longer involved.

Reaching the Stars – Achieving Objectives

According to Carla Koren, *Super Stars Literacy Project Chair*, Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc., JLOEB is currently working with the lowest performing children, by choice and by design. With the League's assistance and additional resources, the children in the program are moving from the bottom of their class to standing shoulder to shoulder with their peers. Based on statistical tracking, the League has seen this growth in kindergarten for the past two years. Additionally, the program's first group of kindergartners (first graders last year) started their second year in the program and their second year in school consistently ahead of their peers and, in fact, finished the year ahead of their peers.

1. *Preventing Reading Difficulty in Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998.

“Beyond the statistics we see daily evidence of the participant’s personal growth. As a result of their academic progress and deliberate focus on working with the ‘whole child,’ we see the children growing in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence, leadership, empathy, anger management, and improved behavior. Notably, in a school where parent or caregiver participation is very poor, we have seen the *SSLP* parents step up in support of their children and our program. We now have a small but growing cadre of parent volunteers and increased involvement in our family-oriented field trips and workshops,” said Ms. Koren. “Average attendance at a Saturday field trip is now 75 (exceeding the capacity of a school bus) and school-based events have between 200-250 attendees time. Lastly, we have witnessed tremendous community support with the JLOEB as the root and the community stemming outward.”

“I am thrilled with the success of the *Super Stars Literacy Project* and with the growth of the participants both academically and socially,” remarked Hoover Elementary School Principal Barbara Mims. “I can cite numerous examples of children who began the program in first grade with poor academic skills, behavior problems and low self confidence, who are now entering third grade not only after testing at the higher end of their peers, but also filled with confidence and acting as leaders among their peers and in their families. In my more than 25 years in the Oakland Unified School District, I have seen many after-school programs but very few as successful as *Super Stars*.”

Putting Education First – Wilma Chan

Assemblywoman Wilma Chan is an outspoken advocate for Oakland public schools. She has created the “Adopt-A-School” program for Oakland and Alameda Unified School Districts. This program encourages and assists individuals and community groups who wish to adopt an elementary school in Oakland or Alameda. The *Super Stars Literacy Project* at Hoover Elementary School is just one of the many “Adopt-A-School” programs currently operating in Assemblywoman Chan’s district.

Women Building Better Communities

The Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. (www.jloeb.org) is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. The JLOEB offers women the opportunity to implement change in the community in three major ways: projects, grants and outreach. The common thread in the JLOEB community work is the League’s dedicated mission focusing on *Children at Risk*.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc.:

Dana Young, (510) 601-7998, danayoung@yahoo.com

Dawn Miyamoto, (510) 452-0490, dkmiyam@aol.com

Office of Assemblywoman Wilma Chan

Julie Hadnot, (510) 287-1670, Julie.Hadnot@asm.ca.gov