

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****November 6 , 2007*****JUNIOR LEAGUE OF OAKLAND-EAST BAY, INC. HIRES  
SUPER STARS LITERACY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR******The after-school program hired Mike Mowery as its Executive Director*****JLOEB Media Contact****JLOEB PR Chair:**Kimberley Hoidal ([kimberlyhoidal@gmail.com](mailto:kimberlyhoidal@gmail.com))

**LAFAYETTE, Calif.** – The *Super Star Literacy (SSL)* program has hired Michael Mowery as its Executive Director to oversee its operations at both Hoover Elementary and Parker Elementary in Oakland, Calif. In anticipation of establishing a 501(c)(3) by year-end and substantially expanding SSL to other Bay Area schools, Mowery will be responsible for the strategic, programmatic and financial management of the organization.

“Mike has extensive corporate background in both large corporations and small startups going through a rapid growth process which we felt would be valuable to *Super Stars Literacy* as we move into our expansion phase,” *SSL* Chairwoman Carla Koren said. “Mike also has extensive experience with several local nonprofits, as a Board member, a volunteer and as a donor, all of which we felt would give us a well-rounded perspective going forward.”

Mowery brings over seven years of community non-profit experience. Mike currently serves on the Board of Directors of Destiny Arts Center (Destiny), and most recently chaired the Search Committee that hired a new Executive Director and restructured the management team. Destiny is an Oakland organization with in-school and after-school programs which empower, build self-esteem, and teach conflict resolution skills to Oakland’s at-risk youth through dance and martial arts training. Like *SSL*, Destiny receives assistance from Prop. 49. He previously chaired the Facilities Committee that negotiated a long-term lease and relocation of Destiny to substantially-improved, larger facilities, keeping rental costs within budget and increasing student attendance. In addition, Mowery has assisted the Development Director in fundraising efforts targeting major donors.

“My primary hope and goal is that through their participation in *Super Stars Literacy*, thousands more previously low-performing students will be able to enter third grade reading at grade level, with the self-confidence and reading foundation to succeed through school and beyond,” Mowery said. “The Junior League’s *SSL* Committee has identified a great need in low-income East Bay communities for our early literacy intervention programming and has done outstanding work in planning for the growth and independence of *Super Stars Literacy*. With the continued support of the wonderful Junior League volunteers, I hope to refine and quickly implement these plans so that we can reach more and more underserved K-2 Bay Area children.”

Mowery's introduction to Destiny came on the heels of tragedy when his daughter, Danielle, passed away suddenly at the age of 16. She had dreams of becoming a teacher; dreams Mowery and his wife decided to honor as best they could. Together, they set up a donor-advised fund at the East Bay Community Foundation in Danielle's memory, supporting youth and education programs. Mowery subsequently became a partner in Social Venture Partners (SVP), where he was introduced to social entrepreneurship. He led an SVP investment team through the process of selecting Destiny Arts Center as a grantee. Since then, he has been intricately involved in the continued success of the Center.

"Ultimately the legacy of my daughter, Danielle, drives my passion for the mission of *Super Stars Literacy*," Mowery said. "Danielle had wanted to be a teacher since she was in the fourth grade. Unfortunately, she passed away before she could achieve her teaching dream. I see my leadership of *Super Stars Literacy* continuing that dream and Danielle continuing to be my muse."

More recently, Mowery joined another engaged philanthropy group, Full Circle Fund, which supports a variety of innovative education initiatives, including the Oakland USD reorganization. He is currently leading the project team that is partnering with Revolution Foods to address the impacts of nutrition and fitness on educational outcomes.

A licensed attorney, Mowery received his law degree from University of Toledo and earned his B.A. in Political Science from The Ohio State University.

"My career as a corporate attorney for entrepreneurial, high-growth technology and telecommunications companies has provided me with the strategic and analytical business and management skills to take *Super Stars Literacy* to scale across the East Bay and beyond," Mowery added. "My volunteer and engaged philanthropy experience over the last seven years, in the areas of youth development and education have provided me with knowledge of the inequities in educational opportunities in our urban communities and the challenges in remedying those inequities."

The *Super Stars Literacy* program was launched in conjunction with Hoover Elementary in 2002, after the JLOEB recognized the crucial role of literacy in a child's future. The comprehensive, after-school, literacy program was designed to make reading fun, and foster the academic and social development of 55 of the lowest performing children in kindergarten through second grades. The program, which has won several awards including a Certificate of Recognition from the California State Assembly, has taken children in the program from the bottom of their class to standing shoulder to shoulder with their peers academically and the children have shown growth in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence, leadership, empathy, anger management, and improved behavior.

"We have had much encouragement from several donors on our expansion plan, as well as positive responses from several school districts looking for an established, successful after school program to complement their classroom literacy curriculum," Koren commented. "Additionally, we have had several organizations outside of California express interest in implementing such a program who have asked for our assistance and guidance. Our goal is to serve eight to twelve schools by this time next year and to continue to grow our capacity to serve. We see Mike as the logical partner to help us execute this

vision and expand our sphere of influence as we work towards improving the communities in which we operate.”

### **Women Building Better Communities**

Founded in 1935, the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. 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. The JLOEB offers women the opportunity to implement change in the community in three major ways: projects, grants, and outreach. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. To learn more, support League projects and/or become a member, please visit <http://www.jloeb.org>.

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