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CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE AT VALLEY OF THE MOON
Public invited to Open House at new "Valley of the Moon Children's Center"

SANTA ROSA, CA March 2, 2009 --- The Valley of the Moon Children's Foundation, in a public-private partnership with the County of Sonoma Human Services Department, today announces the completion of the final phase of a decade-long planning, fund-raising and building effort that includes the new Valley of the Moon Children's Home, which opened in 2005. The newly completed building houses the Redwood Children's Center for forensic interviews as well as support services for foster children and foster parents throughout the county. It will be the first county-owned facility to be registered with the United States Green Building Council for LEED Silver Certification, part of Sonoma County's ongoing effort to provide sustainable and environmentally sensitive facilities.

The newly opened facility is adjacent to Children's Home. Together, both buildings comprise the Valley of the Moon Children's Center. The nonprofit Valley of the Moon Children's Foundation contributed 5.6 million dollars to the 25.2 million dollar building project.

The public is invited to tour both facilities at Community Open House events on Saturday, March 14 and Saturday, March 21 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The Children's Center is located at 112 Children's Circle, just off Highway 12 at Pythian Road in Santa Rosa. Complete information about the events is available at www.vomchildcenter.org.

An invitation-only opening ceremony and ribbon cutting will take place at the facility on March 13. Invitations have been extended to over 300 elected officials, donors, county employees, and community partners who have been instrumental in the success of the project.

"I am so pleased with the final phase of the Valley of the Moon Children's Center. This beautiful facility epitomizes our commitment to provide the best possible care for the children in our community who are the victims of abuse and neglect," said Jo Weber, Director of the County of Sonoma Human Services Department. "The financial and advocacy support we have received over the years from the Foundation has been critical. Foundation members are truly ambassadors for the well-being of our most vulnerable children. On behalf of our staff and the children we serve, I am extremely grateful."

The March 13 opening ceremony will include a memorial to past Foundation president George C. Forrester who died last year at the age of 69. Forrester was a major contributor to the project and a powerful driving force in its success. Most of the funds for the project were raised under his leadership, from 2000 to his death in 2008. He had hoped to be present for the ribbon cutting.

“Under the guidance of past president, George C. Forrester, the Foundation realized a call to action,” said Mardi Shepard, president of the Valley of the Moon Children’s Foundation. “The need was simple. Build a place that kids at risk in Sonoma County could call home. George passed away on March 13 last year—one year ago to the day of our opening ceremony. With George's personal commitment, the Foundation helped achieve this ambitious community dream.”

The new building in the Valley of the Moon Children’s Center consists of new space for the Redwood Children’s Center, a child-friendly facility for forensic interviews of children who may have been molested. It also includes support services for all foster children and foster parents including an equipped medical and dental wing, specialized infant and toddler area, visiting and counseling areas, admissions, and volunteer services. Staff members moved into the new facility in mid-February.

The Valley of the Moon Children’s Home, a program of the County of Sonoma Human Services Department, provides temporary care for children in Sonoma County ages newborn through 18 who are victims of abuse, abandonment, neglect, or whose parents or guardians are unable to care for them. It is the only such shelter in Sonoma County. Only four other counties in the State of California own and operate similar facilities.

The Valley of the Moon Children’s Foundation (www.vomchildrensfoundation.org) is a private, non-profit, tax- exempt 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to improving the lives of abused, neglected and abandoned children, and children in foster care in Sonoma County. In addition to providing ongoing support and enrichment programs to residents of the Valley of the Moon Children’s Home, the Foundation focuses on three key elements: support of emancipated youth, including education, housing and employment guidance; support of children in foster care and foster parents; and community child abuse prevention.

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