

COACHELLA VALLEY HOUSING COALITION

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Date: June 18, 2009

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<p>COACHELLA VALLEY HOUSING COALITION HONORS 55 LOCAL STUDENTS WITH 2009 JFM SCHOLARSHIPS TOTALING \$88,000</p>
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2009 JFM Scholarship Luncheon

Honorees: 55 -2009 JFM Scholarship Recipients and their families

Where: Terra Lago Golf Club, 84-000 Terra Lago Pkwy in Indio, CA

When: Thursday, May 28th, 2009

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Indio – The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) will honor 55 college-bound students on Thursday, May 28th with the 2009 JFM Scholarship for their commitment to higher education and their passion to give back to the community where they live. The awards luncheon for the students and their families begins at 12:00 p.m. at Terra Lago Golf Club, in Indio, CA, where the 55 students will receive scholarship award certificates before friends and family.

The scholarship was created in 2002 by the employees and the Board of Directors of the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition in honor of Executive Director John Mealey's twenty-five plus years of service to CVHC. This year, with help from a match from the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP), scholarships of \$500, \$1,000, and \$5,000 will be awarded to graduating high school seniors and college-enrolled students to help defray the cost of tuition and books. Donations come every year from employees, friends, and partners of the organization.

"For more than 25 years, CVHC has been serving industrious families with dreams of a better life for themselves and their children. The success of those dreams is evidenced in the scores of brilliant students who have earned CVHC JFM scholarships, have gone off to great universities, and are now making a difference in their communities," said John F. Mealey, executive director of the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition.

This year's JFM Scholars include students who are pursuing degrees in architecture and medicine at prestigious institutions of higher learning such as UCLA, Luther College, University of Redlands and UC Berkeley. The annual scholarship is open to students in good-standing whose families live in CVHC housing. The 55 scholarship recipients live in one of CVHC's 27 multi-family housing developments, or have built their homes through CVHC's Mutual Self-Help housing program. In the Mutual Self-Help program, low-income families come together to build their homes and those of their neighbors.

The 2009 scholarship recipients join a group of more than 177 students. Angel Castillo, a first time JFM Scholarship recipient writes in his application: "Ever since we moved into our house I noticed that my parents seemed happier and now I understand that it was because they were accomplishing their dream of giving us a better life. Living in CVHC housing didn't only influence me but it also influenced my whole family. To me education is one of the most important things in life. I am pursuing a college education in order to better myself economically and morally, to help the community, especially the younger generations, and to make my parents proud. Living in CVHC housing influenced my life greatly. In my opinion moving into our new home in 2001 was the best thing that ever happened to our family."

Since the program's inception in 2002, the Coalition has awarded more than \$150,000 in scholarships.

If you would like to interview one or more of the JFM Scholarship recipients or CVHC's founding Executive Director John Mealey, please contact CVHC at 760-347-3157. The full list of the 2009 JFM Scholarship recipients is available at www.cvhc.org.

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Located in Indio, California, about one hundred miles east of Los Angeles, the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) is an award-winning non-profit housing development corporation dedicated to helping low and very-low income families improve their living conditions through advocacy, research, construction, and operation of housing and community development projects. In 2007, CVHC celebrated its 25th anniversary in providing affordable housing and community development programs to hundreds of underserved communities. To date, CVHC has built nearly 4000 homes and apartments for low-income households in Riverside and Imperial counties. In addition, CVHC has developed childcare centers, after-school programs, and medical clinics. It operates various services for its tenants and others including mariachi classes, English as a Second Language and Citizenship classes, an art program, and tennis and recreational programs. For more information, visit www.cvhc.org