

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 29, 2008

Contact: Billie Blair, President
Santa Fe Community Foundation
505-988-9715, ext. 1

**Santa Fe Community Foundation to sing praises of nonprofits
Five to receive prestigious Piñon Award**

The 2008 Piñon Awards ceremony will be presented at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 7 at the Lensic, Santa Fe's Performing Arts Center.

Five nonprofits will be recognized with the prestigious Piñon Award for outstanding service to Northern New Mexico communities.

The five honorees are:

Wise Fool New Mexico, recipient of the Gerónima Cruz Montoya Award for Arts and Humanities;

WildEarth Guardians, recipient of the John J. Kenney Award for Environment;

Girls Inc. of Santa Fe, recipient of the Manuel Luján Sr. Award for Education;

Santa Fe Rape Crisis and Trauma Treatment Center, recipient of the Dr. Brian Moynahan Award for Health and Human Services for its Trauma Treatment Center; and

CASA, First Judicial District, recipient of the John Gaw Meem Award for Civic Affairs.

The ceremony, which is attended by 800 donors, members of the nonprofit community and others, is free and open to the public. This year's mistress of ceremonies will be Maria Benitez, founder and director of *Maria Benitez Teatro Flamenco* and the *Institute for Spanish Arts*.

During the ceremony, each nonprofit honoree will also receive a cash award of \$2,500, plus a hand-etched glass statuette.

Piñon Award Recipients

The Piñon Award for Arts and Humanities will be presented to Wise Fool New Mexico. Wise Fool New Mexico began in 1998 with a small group of women exploring puppetry and circus arts as a vehicle to promote social justice. Today, the organization offers high-quality performances in the arts of circus, puppetry and theater. It is staffed by all women dedicated to using art as a means to

change the world. As part of its programs, the organization hosts a summer circus workshop intensive, where women come together to share in activities that engender physical and personal strength. The workshops aim to build a body-positive community for women of all ages, shapes and sizes in Santa Fe.

Wise Fool New Mexico also sponsors the Peñasco Theatre project, where the community's youth, children and adults participate in circus arts and permaculture workshops.

The award for Environment goes to WildEarth Guardians. In 2008, Sinapu and Forest Guardians joined forces to become WildEarth Guardians. The organization's mission is to protect wildlife, wild rivers and wild places throughout the American West. Through grassroots organizing, scientific analysis and advocacy, WildEarth Guardians aims to increase the quality of life and sustainability of communities. Its priorities include: restoring the Santa Fe River habitat; restoring wolves to the West; designating more than 5,000 miles of streams within New Mexico's national forest as "outstanding waters," meaning specific activities that degrade waters are prohibited; and inspiring residents who live in the West to become voices in the protection of nature.

Girls, Inc. of Santa Fe will receive the award for Education. Girls, Inc. is the only nonprofit in the Santa Fe community focused solely on building self-esteem for girls ages 5 to 18. Through its summer and after-school programs, Girls Inc. provides programs in health and pregnancy prevention, economic and media literacy, career skills, science, math, sports and other areas. Girls, Inc. provides services to families on a sliding fee scale, and 80 percent of participants are from low to low-moderate income households. In 2007, the nonprofit provided 102,678 program hours to about 350 girls. This year, Girls Inc. of Santa Fe celebrates 53 years of service.

The Health and Human Services award will go to Santa Fe Rape Crisis and Trauma Treatment Center for its trauma treatment center. The SFRC & TTC began 35 years ago as a single-service crisis hotline and has evolved into a behavioral health center, providing education and outreach programs, as well as services for survivors of sexual violence and trauma. The core component of the Trauma Treatment Center is to rehabilitate and serve veterans who are returning from combat and who also may have experienced some form of sexual violence. The Center has provided training to law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, firefighters and other responders on working with victims of trauma. SFRC & TTC offers all its services free to the community.

Court Appointed Special Advocates, First Judicial District, will receive the award for Civic Affairs. CASA advocates for children who have been removed from their homes as a result of physical abuse, neglect and/or emotional abuse. The organization, which started in Seattle in 1976, trains adult volunteers from the community to speak on behalf of children in courtrooms. In 2007, CASA, First

Judicial District, advocated for more than 229 children 121 cases representing the judicial districts of Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Los Alamos counties. CASA's mission is to provide stability and hope to abused and neglected children by providing a powerful and constant voice in their lives.

The Santa Fe Community Foundation selected these five nonprofits from 42 nominations from the community.

“The winners are exemplary, and the video presentations at the ceremony are bound to inspire,” said Billie Blair, president of the Santa Fe Community Foundation. “The Piñon Awards are chance to celebrate what’s right with Santa Fe.”

Although the awards ceremony is free and open to the public, RSVPs are required at (505) 988-9715, extension 43.

Established 27 years ago, the Santa Fe Community Foundation improves the quality of life for people in Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico, now and for future generations, by building and managing endowment funds in order to award grants; helping nonprofits operate more effectively; convening area residents to discuss issues of critical importance to the community; and providing leadership for key community initiatives. The community’s assets total nearly \$30 million.