



The Isabel Allende Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

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Isabel Allende Foundation Announces Espiritu Awards

Nine Nonprofit Organizations on Three Continents Honored

SAUSALITO, CA, OCTOBER 22 – Isabel Allende, internationally acclaimed author, today announced the winners of the Isabel Allende Foundation's 2002 Espiritu Awards.

Nine nonprofit groups spanning three continents will be honored with grants ranging from \$5k-\$10k for their work. Espiritu Awards are granted annually to celebrate, honor, and support organizations working to advance positive and compassionate action in the areas of literacy, education, protection of women and children, healthcare, and the pursuit of peace.

"My daughter Paula taught me the two mottos by which I lead my life and by which I lead my foundation," says Allende.

"We only have what we give' and 'when in doubt ask yourself the question, What is the most generous thing to do in this case?"

The Espiritu Awards recipients are:

- **Literacy:** Bring Me A Book Foundation, Mt. View, CA (www.bringmeabook.org)
- **Education:** Fairfax/San Anselmo Children's Center, Fairfax, CA (www.fsacc.org) and Yoga Inside Foundation, Venice, CA (www.yogainside.org)
- **Protection of Women:** Women's Recovery Services, Santa Rosa, CA (www.womensrecoveryservices.org) and La Unidad de Adolescencia, Santiago, Chile (ahv19@hotmail.com)
- **Protection of Children:** City of Joy Aid, India (www.cityofjoyaid.org) and La Casa Esperanza, Mexico (jtpoet@aol.com)
- **Health:** Project Open Hand, San Francisco, CA (www.openhand.org)
- **Pursuit of Peace:** Peace X Peace Global Network, District of Columbia (www.peacexpeace.org)

Isabel Allende established the Isabel Allende Foundation on December 9, 1996 to pay homage to her daughter, Paula Frias, who passed away on December 6, 1992. During her short life Paula worked as a volunteer in poor communities in Venezuela and Spain offering her time, her total dedication, and her skills as an educator and psychologist. She cared deeply for others. The awards are being given on October 22 to commemorate the date of her birth.

A 3:00 p.m. press conference with Isabel and the award recipients will precede Isabel's reading from her newest book, *City of the Beasts*, on November 2 at 4:00 p.m. at Book Passage in Corte Madera, California. More information about Isabel Allende and the Foundation can be found at **www.isabelallendefoundation.org**.

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Isabel Allende Praises Exceptional Programs

■ **Espíritu Awards**

Espíritu Awards were established in 2001 and are proactively granted to celebrate, honor, and support positive and compassionate action in the areas of literacy, education, shelter, healthcare, and the pursuit of peace, among others. Recipients are selected each fall by the foundation and its advisors. Unsolicited requests for Espiritu Awards are not accepted.

■ **Espíritu Grantee Profiles**

The Espiritu Award for Literacy is presented to BRING ME A BOOK FOUNDATION for encouraging the tradition of reading to small children, thereby stimulating their minds, preparing them to learn in school, and strengthening family ties.

FROM ISABEL: "I love the fact that Bring Me A Book helps parents alongside their children and that storytelling contributes to their shared future success."

Bring Me a Book is a simple yet powerful program to help adults improve their English skills while helping their young children. The program is a boon to working families who do not have time to visit a local library and who may not otherwise have access to literacy resources. It is also a thoughtful and appropriate way to support cultural diversity: Bring Me a Book helps parents with limited English skills develop essential language capabilities and does so in a way that helps them further their education alongside their young children. This in contrast to literacy programs aimed primarily or exclusively at children, which can have the unanticipated effect of isolating parents from their increasingly English-fluent children.

Contact: www.bringmeabook.org (650) 625-5000

The Espiritu Award for Education is presented to FAIRFAX-SAN ANSELMO CHILDREN'S CENTER in celebration of its holistic and practical approach to childcare, education, and family/community building.

FROM ISABEL: "Everything about this center reflects the love and respect that is daily shared among staff, children, and families. The children are held in the heart of an extended caring community, and learn and play in an atmosphere of great joy."

Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center is an outstanding program that approaches childcare as care for the entire family. For 28 years the center has been creating a community that fosters each child's learning and growth in an atmosphere where affection, joy, and nurturing abound in ample quantity. The center offers daycare to infants and children, after-school and summer activities, meals to go, parenting workshops and support groups, counseling on matters of health, safety and nutrition, and special parenting support services for men. Contact: www.fsacc.org (415) 454-1811

The Espiritu Award for Education is also presented to YOGA INSIDE FOUNDATION for bringing the wisdom and yoga practices of the East to help troubled individuals in the West.

FROM ISABEL: "I am moved by the amazing work Yoga Inside volunteers do in a quiet and steady way to promote profound change in the lives of those who are struggling. By teaching the connections between mind, body, and spirit, they are nurturing the seeds of peace."

Yoga Inside Foundation brings yoga to nearly 100 places where it's most needed yet least accessible: schools, treatment centers, children's shelters, pregnant teen programs, juvenile detention facilities, prisons, inner-city communities, and a variety of other settings. Its mission is to "encourage freedom within" using the 5,000 year-old practices of yoga and meditation. This work is rooted in a long tradition of karma yoga, the yoga of service to others.

Contact: www.yogainside.org (888)569-9642

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The Espiritu Award for Protection of Women is presented to WOMEN'S RECOVERY SERVICES for helping addicted mothers and their children stay together along the arduous path to recovery.

FROM ISABEL: "I have seen the devastating effects of addiction in families. Children are the first victims; they suffer abandonment and often are abused. It is moving to see the mothers in this program caring for their children as they struggle to heal themselves."

Women's Recovery Services was founded in 1975 to assist women alcoholics and addicts recover and rebuild their families. Through education, therapy, shelter, and love, mothers can achieve sobriety in a 90-day residential program without being separated from their children and are afterward offered a transitional home. In this healing and non-threatening environment, mothers acquire self-esteem and the skills needed to enable them to better care for their children. It is the only substance-abuse treatment facility from Marin County to the California/Oregon border where women can live with their children while recovering from addictions. Contact: www.womensrecoveryervices.org (707) 527-0412

The Espiritu Award for Protection of Women is also presented to LA UNIDAD DE ADOLESCENCIA, Consultorio Las Américas, Chile, for its outstanding work encouraging pregnant teens to care for themselves and their babies, and helping them reintegrate into their families, schools, and communities.

FROM ISABEL: "Hope is the best contraception for adolescents. I strongly support the dedicated staff and volunteers at La Unidad de Adolescencia who are bringing hope and safety to pregnant teenagers who would otherwise fall through the cracks."

La Unidad de Adolescencia was founded by a group of doctors, psychologists, and social workers to serve the young, pregnant teens of a poor neighborhood in Santiago, Chile. One out of every six children in Chile is born to a single mother who is not yet 20 years old; 60 percent of these teens will have another child before they reach adulthood. Pregnant adolescents are typically poor and have fallen behind in school even before getting pregnant; their pregnancies only push them further into poverty. La Unidad de Adolescencia offers contraception, prenatal care, and vocational training to its clients. Its programs help educate young women on how to avoid a second pregnancy, complete their basic education, and, whenever possible, assists them in becoming financially self-sufficient. Contact: Andrea Huneus Vergara, ahv19@hotmail.com

The Espiritu Award for Protection of Children is presented to CITY OF JOY to acknowledge and thank French author Dominique Lapiere and his wife, also named Dominique, for their incredible dedication to impoverished people in India.

FROM ISABEL: "The work that the Lapierras are doing in India is as inspiring to me as that of Mother Theresa. They have worked selflessly and tirelessly. Single-handedly they have carried on this incredibly ambitious project and the results are amazing."

City of Joy was founded 20 years ago by the Lapierras to save children in Calcutta and rural Bengal from leprosy and extreme poverty. Today, City of Joy Aid comprises a network of clinics, schools, rehabilitation centers, and hospital boats to provide help to the poorest of the poor. To date, the organization has rescued 9,000 children, suppressed tuberculosis in 1,200 villages, dug 541 tube wells for drinking water, provided medical assistance to 5 million patients, and taught women from 1,000 villages to read and write. The Lapierras personally contribute the resources needed to cover City of Joy's operating expenses so that every donated dollar can be put to work fighting poverty. Contact: www.cityofjoyaid.org (707) 847-6147

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The Espiritu Award for Protection of Children is also presented to LA CASA ESPERANZA to support the care it lovingly provides to orphans in Sonora, Mexico.

FROM ISABEL: “If you could see the smiles of the little children in Casa Esperanza, you would agree with me that this orphanage really is a house of hope. How can so much be done with so little?”

Casa Esperanza (House of Hope) is a small orphanage in the Sonoran desert of Mexico. The 35 children who live at the Casa are well provided for, but of course each dreams of being adopted by a loving family. Staff members each earn the equivalent of \$100 a month when their salaries can be paid, but must often wait months for sufficient donations to arrive to make even this possible. Casa Esperanza has no website or brochure, but if it did, it would say that money is what they need most, and that a little goes a long way. Donations are accepted through Mission Heartbeat, which generously manages the books of the orphanage and processes donations without charging for its expenses. Contact: Jim Tipton, jtpoet@aol.com

The Espiritu Award for Health is presented to PROJECT OPEN HAND to support its recently developed work to provide food and love to women with cancer.

FROM ISABEL: “In the years since I first heard about Project Open Hand and became a supporter, this remarkable organization has grown and changed in many ways. But one thing has stayed the same--people reaching out to others in loving compassion that brings healing as surely as the nourishing food that is offered.”

Known best for providing nutritious meals to individuals living with critical illnesses, Project Open Hand continues to expand its services, most recently to seniors and women living with cancer. Last year alone, 5,000 people with HIV/AIDS received food from Project Open Hand, 3,500 seniors received lunches in the Senior Lunch Program, and over 110,000 bags of groceries were given out at the Grocery Centers. Through the new Homebound Critically Ill Program, Project Open Hand now provides daily, home-delivered meals to women living with breast cancer and other forms of cancer. Contact: www.openhand.org (415) 447-2300

The Espiritu Award for the Pursuit of Peace is presented to PEACE X PEACE GLOBAL NETWORK to help its founder, Patricia Smith Melton, create a documentary about circles of women working for peace in places of conflict and violence.

FROM ISABEL: “War seems to be a male obsession. Peace is every woman’s dream. Peace requires tending, healing, rebuilding, reaching out to those who are injured, denied, and in pain. A network of women is trying to do this all over the world. We need to know about their work. That is the purpose of this documentary.”

The mission of Peace x Peace is to promote peace through a female perspective of truth, tolerance, and building “adalah,” the Arabic word for restorative justice, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, and moral balance. Peace x Peace coordinates circles of women committed to solving conflict through dialogue and negotiation. The Peace x Peace documentary has begun filming women’s circles in the United States, Afghanistan, Burundi, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and South America. This film has three primary goals: To reveal, highlight, and honor the pursuit of peace by women; to introduce a large audience to the circle structure as a viable social strategy with the potential to help us achieve peace; to inspire and invite audiences to become part of a global network of women pursuing peace. Contact: www.peacexpeace.org or patricia@peacexpeace.org