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Long Beach Community Foundation Awards Grant to the Historical Society of Long Beach for Cambodian Archive Project

Long Beach, CA – The Board of Directors of Long Beach Community Foundation (LBCF) has named the Historical Society of Long Beach as the recipient of their annual strategic grant. The LBCF strategic focus for 2009 addresses the preservation of the Cambodian community’s rich history in Long Beach by awarding this \$40,000 grant. The Historical Society of Long Beach (HSLB) is collaborating with two professors from CSU Long Beach and CSU Dominguez Hills on the Cambodian Community History and Archive Project (CamCHAP) to create an archive of historical photographs and documents related to the Cambodian community in Long Beach.

CamCHAP founders, Dr. Karen Quintiliani, Associate Professor of Anthropology at CSU Long Beach, and Dr. Susan Needham, Professor of Anthropology at CSU Dominguez Hills, have longstanding relationships with the Cambodian community in Long Beach, which is considered to be the largest Cambodian community outside Southeast Asia. “With only a little more than 30 years in the United States, Cambodians have created a vibrant community with contributions in our city to arts, civic engagement, and business development,” says Dr. Needham. “We can be proud that Long Beach has the first ‘Cambodia Town’ in the world, and we hope having our collection of historical and ethnographic materials available at HSLB and on the Internet will create interest in how immigrants contribute to cities like Long Beach,” adds Dr. Quintiliani.

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Over 2000 photographs and nearly 1400 English and Khmer newspapers, documents, unpublished manuscripts and reports have been collected in this effort to preserve the rich history of Cambodians in Long Beach. The Historical Society of Long Beach will catalog, index, and digitize these items and house the collection on their premises where it will be accessible to the public for research and review.

Another aspect of this project is development of the CamCHAP interactive, multimedia website which will make select items from this collection available remotely through the Internet. Through photographs, historical documents, audio recordings, and video clips, this website will tell the story of Cambodians in Long Beach – how they came to be the largest community outside Southeast Asia, how they rebuilt their lives in the wake of tragedy, how they have recreated Cambodian cultural practices here, and the ways in which they have contributed to the economy, politics, and redevelopment of the Anaheim Street corridor of Long Beach.

Julie Bartolotto, Executive Director of HSLB, is proud to add this Cambodian archive to their collection. “This project fits perfectly with our mission to promote, develop, exhibit, and preserve Long Beach history. With the addition of CamCHAP to our collection, we can more effectively serve students, educators, researchers, and those interested in local history as they seek to learn more about their community,” says Julie.

Because of the magnitude and time-intensive nature of this project, the anticipated completion date and public introduction to the archive and website is January 2011. At that time, HSLB will hold a public event to introduce the archived collection, launch the website, show its capabilities, and provide instructions on how to use it.

“Our goal with this grant is to connect with the Cambodian community in a way that gives life to their story for the entire community to appreciate,” says Jim Worsham, President & CEO of LBCF. “Telling their story and preserving their rich history here is critical to understanding the great community we have in Long Beach.”

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Long Beach Community Foundation has operated since July 2007 as an independent charitable organization, breaking away from its 11-year affiliate status with the California Community Foundation. Its mission *to initiate positive change for Long Beach through charitable giving, stewardship and strategic grant-making* is carried out through its management of donor-advised funds, endowments, planned giving assistance and community benefit funds. LBCF currently administers more than 40 charitable funds. (Web site: www.longbeachcf.org)

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