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For Immediate Release

Valley Leadership Class 35 Impact

June 13, 2014 (Phoenix, AZ) – Class 35 of Leadership Institute, Valley Leadership’s flagship program, completed its program year on June 6, after presenting the results of year-long, collaborative group work benefiting Valley of the Sun communities.

Fifty-five members of Class 35 completed the nine-month leadership development program, which requires attendance at nine issue-focused program days in addition to the significant group work and other program obligations. The program also included a leadership skills curriculum delivered by instructors from Thunderbird School of Global Management.

Valley Leadership’s mission is “to enhance the abilities of individuals to serve and strengthen our communities.” The group projects required of each Leadership Institute class are just one example of the ways that Valley Leadership participants and alumni make significant and lasting impact on local communities. Following Valley Leadership tradition, group projects are judged and scored by a panel of Valley Leadership alumni and key community partners, based on criteria such as understanding an issue of regional importance; creating and completing a usable project; practicing and modeling civil discourse skills throughout; connecting with both classmates and community leaders; and making a positive impact on the community.

The winning project for Class 35 launched an art mobile program, Arts4All, in partnership with the Phoenix Center for the Arts. The mobile brings free arts education directly to communities where little or no art opportunities currently exist. The group, led by project leader Michael Ponzio, raised over \$50,000 to support the launch of this new innovative art mobile program.

The six other group projects from Class 35 were:

Community Investment Fund - Created the Community Investment Fund, in partnership with CPLC Préstamos CDFI, LLC, to support entrepreneurs looking to start-up or expand their business in the Phoenix metropolitan area. This project awarded \$105,000 in loans to five entrepreneurs.

Creighton School District Wish List – Leveraged connections to provide \$166,500 of direct and in-kind support to schools in the Creighton School District based on their identified needs.

Diversity and Inclusion Assembly - Celebrated diversity and inclusion during an all-day educational assembly for the senior class at Alhambra High School and awarded a \$2,000 college scholarship during this interactive day of learning, reflection and celebration for the students.

Get in the Game - Designed to highlight the urgent need for male mentors to volunteer in the West Valley, this project coordinated a mentoring awareness event.

Playground for Children with Autism – Built a sensory playground for children with autism who are attending Arizona’s first approved tuition-free charter school focused on children with autism, Arizona Autism Charter Schools, Inc.



Sex Trafficking Summit – Hosted a free Summit attended by 300 professionals that focused on prevention for high risk victims and also techniques for prevention of perpetration by boys/young men.

While creating these examples of sustainable impact on our communities, Class 35 collectively raised approximately \$363,500 in cash and in-kind support and contributed approximately 3,300 combined volunteer hours over nine months.

“The quality of the Class 35 projects, in terms of depth, breadth, and potential for continued impact, is incredibly impressive,” Christy Moore, Executive Director, said. “Since group projects were introduced to the Leadership Institute experience several years ago, the projects have become a defining part of the experience of learning how to lead in the community. We continue to be amazed by the work that the groups do on their own time.”

Class 35 membership includes Past Honoree for Valley Leadership’s Man of the Year award, Tom Ambrose, policy, communications, and marketing experts, healthcare administrators, attorneys and small business owners, nonprofit executives and philanthropists, law enforcement from the City of Phoenix and Salt River Police Department and elected officials.

Valley Leadership’s Class 36 will commence its programming year in late August; the class membership is expected to be announced in mid-July. Valley Leadership is currently seeking group project proposals for Class 36. Community benefit organizations interested in submitting a proposal should email Valley Leadership: VL@valleyleadership.org.

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About Valley Leadership

For 35 years, Valley Leadership has been dedicated to engaging, educating and challenging current and emerging leaders to take an active role in strengthening and transforming communities. To date, more than 1,800 men and women have participated in Valley Leadership. Today, these alumni comprise a broad leadership network that spans the public, private and non-profit sectors into the highest levels of Arizona government, community, non-profit and business leadership.