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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

National Endowment for the Arts Awards Grant to San José Mariachi Education Program

**Top Arts Agency Awards Prestigious Learning in the Arts Grant
To Mexican Heritage Music Education Program**

San José, CA - April 27, 2010 - The Mexican Heritage Corporation, the non-profit producer of the annual San Jose Mexican Heritage and Mariachi Festival, today announced the organization's selection by the National Endowment for the Arts to receive a prestigious NEA grant in support of Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth.

The amount of the grant is \$21,000 and supports MHC's year - round mariachi music education program in San Jose schools. These funds will be leveraged with earned revenue from the annual San Jose Mexican Heritage and Mariachi Festival and additional funds from philanthropy to support mariachi education in several public schools in San Jose in 2010. This is the second NEA grant to MHC in one year; the Mexican Heritage Festival also received a grant of \$30,000. Total funding from the NEA in support of MHC programs in FY 2010 is \$51,000.

Learning in the Arts grants support in-depth, curriculum-based arts education experiences that occur over an extended period. Projects must provide participatory learning and engage students with skilled artists, teachers, and excellent art. MHC's mariachi education program provides students and teachers the opportunity to experience live performance by mariachi musicians and to study and learn how to perform the music of the mariachi in a standard's based setting.

Festival Artistic Director Linda Ronstadt, who testified before Congress last year in support of funding for music education, stated, "The benefits of music education to our children are profound – in every aspect of our human condition music connects us to a higher place – academically and psychologically. But NEA funding is not only about support for the arts – the NEA is a vital partner in building community and driving service based arts programs that wouldn't otherwise exist but for the Endowment's support."

Dr. Diana Hollinger, a Trustee of the MHC and Director of San Jose State's music education program also noted, "this support from the NEA will produce a "triple bottom line" benefit – it reaches local children in San Jose with little or no access to music and arts programs, it provides San Jose's school children with exposure and access to the beauty of Mexico's traditional music and it does so in a live performance setting, with the participation of professional mariachi musicians."

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About the Mexican Heritage Corporation

With a mission to affirm, celebrate and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Mexican community and showcase multicultural arts within the region and nationally, MHC both presents and produces a vibrant array of multi-disciplinary arts programs in theatre, dance, and music education and in the visual arts. To learn more about the San Jose Mariachi and Mexican Heritage Festival, and MHC visit www.sjmariachifestival.org and www.mhcviva.org