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Inland Empire Community Foundation Celebrates 85 Years of Inland Empire Philanthropy

Anniversary celebration honors donors and fundholders and sets new goals for charitable giving across the Inland Empire

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Riverside, CA – Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF) celebrated its 85th anniversary Sept. 13 at Crestmore Manor, bringing together donors, fundholders, professional advisors and community partners who have helped support charitable giving across Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The celebration launched IECF's anniversary year under the theme Here For Good, reflecting the Foundation's commitment to the good of the community today and to generations of Inland Empire residents still to come.

IECF also announced four goals for its 85th year: establish 85 new charitable funds, secure $85 million in planned gifts, partner with 85 professional advisors and raise $8.5 million for IECF Signature Funds.

"Eighty-five years of IECF is really a story about people who care deeply about this region and chose to do something about it," said Michelle Decker, president and CEO of IECF. "That generosity has supported students, nonprofits and communities across the Inland Empire for generations. As we celebrate this anniversary, we're also thinking about how to bring more people into philanthropy and keep those resources working here for years to come."
IECF traces its roots to 1941, when Charles and Clara Brouse established The Riverside Foundation. Scholarships were among the Foundation's earliest priorities and continue to benefit today's students.

That history was reflected in the story of Jesse Melgar, chair of IECF's board of directors and founding chair of the CIELO Fund. Melgar received an IECF scholarship at 18 that helped him attend UCLA. He later joined the Foundation's board and now serves as chair.

"Someone I may never have met looked at my future and decided it was worth investing in," Melgar told guests.

The program also featured donor Terry Bridges, who shared his personal commitment to being Here for Good, saying, "I was put on this earth to do good, and I have an obligation to do good for my community. I realized that in doing good, I got good back." Jessica Kaczmarek, Priority Communities Initiative Director at The James Irvine Foundation, spoke about the foundation's longstanding relationship with IECF and investment in the Inland Empire. In her remarks, she stated, "We live in a community that we all benefit from and that we all shape. I do think we all have a stake in the Inland Empire's future."

Today, IECF manages more than 470 charitable funds, including donor-advised, endowed, scholarship and field-of-interest funds. Recent work includes a $5 million Nonprofit Loan Fund and $850,000 in Community Impact Fund grants to 45 organizations, along with Signature Funds focused on communities and issues throughout the region.

The Foundation's 85th anniversary goals are intended to bring more people into charitable giving, expand planned gifts and strengthen partnerships with financial planners, attorneys and accountants who work with clients on charitable and estate planning.

"Here For Good is our promise to this region," Decker said. "We want philanthropy in the Inland Empire to keep growing, reaching more people and supporting the communities we love for generations to come. Our 85th anniversary gives us a chance to recommit to that work and invite more people to be part of it."

IECF is grateful to the **Randall Lewis, Janell Lewis & The Lewis Group of Companies** for their support as Presenting Sponsors, along with Premier Sponsorship from Amazon and Wells Fargo and additional support from Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation, Edison International, Riverside Construction Company and IEHP.

About the Inland Empire Community Foundation

Founded in 1941, the Inland Empire Community Foundation is the oldest and largest community foundation in Inland Southern California. We partner with individuals, families and corporations to help them achieve their charitable goals. Since inception, we have given out over $267 million in grants and scholarships. For more information visit the IECF's website at www.iegives.org*. Be a part of our conversation on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.*