

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL ARTS SCHOOL ARTISTIC DIRECTOR RECEIVES HUMANITARIAN AWARD

January 10, 2008 – Baldwin Park, CA – Founder and Artistic Director of Creative Planet School of the Arts, Mr. Billy Rugh, from Duarte, CA has been awarded the David Chow Humanitarian Award from the Foundation holding the same name, an organization that pays tribute to those who give to help others. The Foundation goes beyond existing programs to honor Los Angeles-area residents who dedicate their lives to helping others in need. For seven years, the Foundation has continued to select, recognize and reward uncommon individuals whose acts of great compassion and unselfishness have contributed to bettering the lives of others and whose devotion might otherwise have gone unnoticed. The Foundation was conceived and founded by David Chow, a Chinese immigrant who came to the US in his teens and completed his Masters degree by the age of 19. He became a successful entrepreneur and businessman, economist, kung fu and judo champion. He was best known for his acting work in movies, TV, and commercials. The personal award, the Foundation's medallion, will be engraved with the hand/heart symbol. Its meaning – *I give you my heart; I give you my strength* – symbolizes the qualities by which the recipients give of themselves to help others. The selection committee was made of up of civic, community and business people representing a wide spectrum of professions.

This year, the award is being given to Mr. Billy Rugh who founded Creative Planet School of the Arts (www.cpsoa.org) 7 years ago. As artistic director and principal, he operates the school on a shoestring budget, puts in 60hr work weeks, while earning less than each of his employees to insure that the needs of the school are met first. Through his school, Mr. Billy provides these local children a place where they can channel their energies and creativity. He gives them a safe place to explore many different artistic avenues which while doing so helps them improve their grades, become more in tune to the needs of others and learn the responsibility of giving back to the community or to more urgent causes. Mr. Billy's students learn that through arts education they gain a higher grade point average, self esteem and the determination to achieve any and all their dreams. Children today have many obstacles in their lives and constantly need reassurance and real life illustrations that it is possible to overcome anything. Because Mr. Billy and his school refuse to turn any student away due to their family's financial situation, 95% of the

students enrolled at the school are on some kind of financial aid. Not only does Mr. Billy help his students learn how to become better students, artists and performers, he has taught his children how to help other children in greater need by using their Art. In 2006, the students of CPSOA performed, "Mapambano," (Swahili for "the struggle") an hour long production he created depicting the lives of Tanzanian AIDS orphans and how these African children's lives are affected by the AIDS crisis through dance and song. Mr. Billy regularly takes his students to perform at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and have raised money for the children's CD library in the cancer wing. Through his actions, they have performed at events raising awareness for spousal & child abuse as well as contributing their performances to help raising money for the East San Gabriel Valley Coalition for the Homeless.

A representative from the David Chow Humanitarian Award Foundation will be making an official presentation to Mr. Billy at the school's winter production on Wednesday, January 16 at 7:00pm at the Baldwin Park Performing Arts Center at 4640 Maine Ave. Baldwin Park, CA 91706.

For more information please call Santo Ragno @ 323-868-6323.

###