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LAUSD CUTS THE RIBBON AT CENTRAL LA LEARNING CENTER #1 K-5
TWO NEW LAUSD PILOT SCHOOLS CELEBRATE A SHARED LEARNING COMMUNITY THAT
HONORS THE PAST WHILE BUILDING THE FUTURE

(Los Angeles, CA) - At the former site of the Ambassador Hotel, where presidential candidate and Senator (D-NY) Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1968, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board President Mónica García joined members of the Kennedy family as well as parents, students, community members and elected officials to cut the ribbon today at Central Los Angeles Learning Center #1 K-5 (CLALC#1 K-5). CLALC#1 K-5 opened to more than 800 students on September 9, 2009.

"My father was a champion of those who suffered disadvantages in America. He was actively engaged in helping people help themselves through community action," said Maxwell Kennedy, son of Robert and Ethel Kennedy. "This new K-12 learning center will educate and empower our young people and their parents to fight for economic and social justice. I know of no better way to advance the living legacy of Robert Kennedy."

"The messages Robert F. Kennedy worked to deliver to us decades ago - that we can all be part of a change for a better world, a greater world - are alive with us as we celebrate the opening of not one, but two exciting new pilot schools here at Central Los Angeles Learning Center #1 K-5," Board President García said. "Years of commitment and struggle led by parents and the community come to fruition today as we mark profound change for students that now have two unique small schools dedicated to incorporating new and innovative methods of teaching."

The new elementary school site features two pilot schools (schools within the LAUSD given charter-like autonomy over curriculum): University California Los Angeles (UCLA) Community School (UCS) and New Open World (NOW) Academy. Both schools provide students with an opportunity to continue their education on the same school site once the middle and high school portions of the larger campus are completed. This will help assure a connection with students' families and to support students in reaching their goals.

Every student at UCS will be taught to read and write in English and Spanish, as well as have the opportunity to participate in projects and research with UCLA students and faculty. Led by the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS), which specializes in educational equity and preparing teachers for urban schools, UCLA experts helped to develop UCS's instructional programs and train teachers. The school is governed by a board that includes representatives from UCLA, LAUSD Local District 4, community groups, the United Teachers Los Angeles union, parents and other stakeholders. The instructional program draws on extensive research by UCLA and other scholars about how students learn best - when they feel part of a supportive, family-like group. Students are grouped into three multi-

grade "dens," each overseen by a lead teacher responsible for learning activities in his or her den.

"UCLA Community School is one of many examples of the University's commitment to serve greater Los Angeles through partnerships that harness our scholarship and engage the community," UCLA Chancellor Gene Block said. "We're well-positioned to help ensure a high-quality education for students in this neighborhood and prepare them for college. We are pleased to be working closely with LAUSD and community groups on this critical endeavor, and our partnership is serving as a model for other universities and school districts."

"We believe strongly that it indeed takes a community to educate a child, and the UCLA Community School is an innovative response to that maxim," UCS Principal Georgia Lazo said.

"UCLA Community School is paving new paths for genuine collaboration and co-construction of curriculum and professional development. We are committed to graduating students who have a high degree of academic achievement, take pride in their home cultures and languages and develop as engaged citizens."

NOW is focused on the development of the whole child, aiming to equip every pupil with the essential skills for lifelong learning. The main goal of NOW is to develop globally-minded, technologically-proficient students who achieve academic excellence, recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, and are lifelong learners.

A key component of this vision is to ensure that students move beyond an understanding of social justice and equality to a point of empowerment, where they become active participants in changing the world. To promote global citizenship, each student will have an increased knowledge of the Korean and Spanish language and culture.

"The NOW Academy is a grassroots organization of experienced elementary, middle and high school teachers who wanted to make a difference in the education of students using the autonomies of pilot schools to enhance learning through state-of-the-art project based curriculum," NOW Principal Annette Kessler said. "Their extensive teaching experience and leadership skills, along with partnerships from Pepperdine and Antioch Universities, provide the foundation for meeting our goals."

CLALC#1 K-5 also features two pieces of public art addressing the social and political history. The first is a 3-D mural photo collage by artist Gale McCall with images of the hotel. The second is a "Labyrinth" by artist Lynn Goodpasture where a student can sit on one side and draw for another student opposite; symbolizing the experience of prominent pioneering African-American architect Paul Williams who learned to draw sketches upside down so white clients would not be uncomfortable sitting next to him.

"We are blessed to continue to have the development of new Learning Centers in our community," California State Assembly Member Mike Davis (D-48) said. "Each building presents an opportunity for hope for our future leadership."

Both schools provide overcrowding relief to schools in one of the most densely populated areas of Los Angeles: Cahuenga, Del Olmo, Hobart, Hoover and Kim elementary schools, as well as Mariposa-Nabi Primary Center.

"Because of overcrowding, children from this neighborhood were on year-round calendars and bused to other communities, both severe detriments to a quality education," said Councilmember José Huizar, former president of the LAUSD Board of Education. "It was in fact a matter of social justice, something Robert Kennedy would have appreciated. Today we honor his memory and legacy by saying these students will now have the opportunity to pursue the kind of education they deserve and in doing so, will live the American Dream that Mr. Kennedy envisioned for all young people."

"Robert Kennedy told us what makes life worthwhile is the health of our children and the quality of their education," said Paul Schrade, former senior aide to Robert F. Kennedy. "Our new K thru 5 schools are a great joy but the crisis of underfunding of quality education becomes the new struggle for parents and our RFK-12 Community Task Force."

"The school is a living legacy of the life of Robert F. Kennedy," said Dolores Huerta, Co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union. "He was a man of courage, compassion, and extraordinary leadership who championed the cause of peace and gave a voice to all who suffered institutional discrimination. He lifted the cause of the farmworkers to the national conscience and was a dear friend of Cesar E. Chavez."

"New Open World Academy and UCLA Community School are providing enriched educational opportunities to neighborhood students," Local District 4 Interim Superintendent Byron J. Maltez said. "With the middle school and high school portions of the campus opening next year, we are offering these neighborhood students the chance to attend school on the same campus through the twelfth grade, encouraging the consistent involvement of school administration as well as parents and community in student development."

When the middle school and high school buildings are completed in 2010, the campus will be one of the LAUSD's one of the few new comprehensive K-12 campus. It will serve 4,400 students living in the surrounding nine-block radius, many of whom are currently bused to distant, overcrowded schools.

"We hope that this project will serve as an inspiration not only to the students and teachers that work and learn here, but also as model of what is possible in terms of creating a community-serving institution that will enrich the entire neighborhood," said Armando L. Gonzalez, FAIA, principal of Gonzalez Goodale Architects, the firm that designed the school.

"From the history and culture evoked in the artwork that will be present throughout the site to the joint use features which will allow the community to access key portions of the campus after hours, the K-5 is a preview of what is an artfully constructed landmark K-12 project in the heart of Los Angeles," LAUSD Chief Facilities Executive Guy

Mehula said. "This is a state-of-the-art neighborhood school designed and built to meet the needs of the surrounding community today and for years to come."

The CLALC #1 K-5 is one of 80 new schools completed as part of LAUSD's \$20.1 Billion New School Construction and Modernization Program to provide every student with a classroom seat in a safe and healthy neighborhood school operating on a traditional, two-semester calendar.

For more information, please visit www.laschools.org.

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