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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Santa Barbara Foundation 2017 Celebrate Philanthropy Awards

NOVEMBER 3, 2017 – The Santa Barbara Foundation and *The Santa Maria Times* hosted the 2017 Celebrate Philanthropy luncheon November 2 at the Santa Maria Country Club honoring James H. Bray, Agnes Grogan, and Delores and Jerry Luis for their impactful work in the community.

“Generous and caring – that is the soul of our community,” said President and CEO Ron Gallo, “because these people such a vivid example of the good we can do for each other and for our collective future. Philanthropy is and always will be at the heart of what we do at the Santa Barbara Foundation, and we will continue to be guided by community first, innovation, listening, transparency and clarity.”

The first honoree recognized was Jim Bray, a retired U.S. Army Special Forces lieutenant colonel and former employee of Pacific Coast Energy Company. An active member of the Santa Maria Breakfast Rotary Club, Bray and his wife, Denise, are involved with the Boys & Girls Club, Santa Maria Valley YMCA, the Allan Hancock College Foundation, and the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts Foundation, VTC Enterprises, among others.

As remarkable as Bray’s service to the community is, one act of kindness stands out. When his wife was in need of a kidney transplant, Bray didn’t think twice before giving her one of his. Bray credits his philanthropic spirit to his father and grandfather. “My father and granddaddies were elected officials when I was growing up in Georgia,” Bray said. “I think it was watching them that really motivated me to become more involved in my community.”

Next, Agnes Grogan, a beloved figure in the community and the very first executive director of the Hancock College Foundation, was honored. When Grogan and her late husband, Bob Grogan, moved to Santa Maria, Agnes was hesitant to call it home. However, she soon discovered her passion for teaching and for making difference in the lives of young people. “Everyone deserves a higher education. These young people are our future voters, community leaders, and parents.” On a path and not taking no for an answer, Grogan began asking for money to fund scholarships. With her tenacity and vision, the Hancock College Foundation became a reality and has made college a possibility for so many.

Lastly, Delores and Jerry Luis were recognized. Both Orcutt natives, these high school sweethearts have been on a journey of philanthropy for over 60 years. If there's a cause in need of support, the Luis' can be counted on to lend a hand. From supporting Cruzin' for Life, GenSpan, the Minerva Club, St. Joseph High School, attending the annual Joe White Memorial Dinner, to walking a dog who lives at the animal shelter, we are honored to give back to our community," said Delores Luis.

While they support a multitude of nonprofits and civic organizations in Santa Maria Valley, Oasis Senior Center has their hearts. Along with Alice Shaw and Ken Parker, Jerry's parents, Anita and Cerfee Luis, were instrumental in the development of Oasis, the largest senior center in northern Santa Barbara County. Oasis started out with only two buildings and now boasts five. Warm and welcoming, the center is a place where seniors can dance, play bridge, exercise, take arts and crafts classes, learn new things and make new friends. "We are so honored to have been able to help the center grow," Delores Luis said.

To learn more about past honorees or the 2017 Celebrate Philanthropy luncheon, please contact Lynette Muscio at (805) 880-9394 or lmuscio@sbfoundation.org, or visit our [website](#).

About the Santa Barbara Foundation

The Santa Barbara Foundation was established in 1928 to enrich the lives of the people of Santa Barbara County through philanthropy. As the largest community foundation in the county and a major source of funding for local nonprofits, the foundation is committed to building philanthropy, strengthening the nonprofit sector and solving community concerns.

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