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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rancho Santiago Community College District Receives \$225,000 Early Learning Mentor Coach Grant from the Office of Head Start

(Santa Ana)—Rancho Santiago Community College District’s (RSCCD) Early Head Start program was recently awarded \$225,000 to fund a 17-month pilot Early Learning Mentor Coaches initiative. The central Orange County college district program is one of 16 programs in California and 131 nationwide selected for this grant funded under The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

“This grant provides outstanding opportunities for professional growth of our early childhood educators,” said Debbie McBee, director of RSCCD’s Early Head Start program. “Since the development of children is directly linked to the development of the adults who work with them, the Mentor Coach Program will help boost the learning of our young students, which will be beneficial to the community in the long run.”

RSCCD’s Early Head Start (EHS) program serves Santa Ana, the largest city in Orange County with a population of almost 370,000 residents, including over 4,500 children under the age of three who are eligible for EHS services, according to the *14th Annual Report on the Condition of Children in Orange County*. RSCCD EHS and its partners are currently serving 140 infants/toddlers and expectant families through center-based and home-based programs in Santa Ana. The center-based program has eight classrooms serving 56 infants and toddlers.

RSCCD EHS will use this new grant to develop a mentor-coaching program that will foster teaching staff professional growth by providing the tools to explore new content, reflect, and problem solve within the teaching environment. The Early Learning Mentor Coach program’s objectives include:

- Providing direct mentor coaching services to RSCCD’s eight EHS master teachers and five EHS home visitors provided by HABLA, an educational outreach program of UCI’s School of Social Sciences. (HABLA provides parent coaching and home visits to increase school readiness of disadvantaged Latino children.)

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- Creating a sustainable system that carry on once the Early Learning Mentor Coaches grant has ended.

Mentor coaching strategies focus on “on-the-job” guidance and training. The program will ensure that the teaching staff and home visitors implement effective strategies to support children’s learning with an emphasis in the areas of early literacy and language development leading to school readiness.

For more information about the programs and services of RSCCD Child Development Services, contact (714) 480-7546 or visit www.rsccd.edu/ChildDevelopmentServices.

About Rancho Santiago Community College District

The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCCD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.

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