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**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Project "Rafiki" and "The San Jose Great Thanksgiving Listen"**

Silicon Valley Talent Partnership collaborates with StoryCorps and other partners to celebrate the diversity, achievement and contribution of the San Jose immigrant community

San José, CA – This November, one of the largest and most unique partnerships in the Country is taking hold in San Jose. The **City of San Jose's Office of Immigrant Affairs, East Side Union High School District, San Jose Unified School District, StoryCorps, and The Silicon Valley Talent Partnership** are proud to be rolling out Project "Rafiki". Project Rafiki seeks to enhance cultural literacy and acknowledge the contributions of the immigrant community to the City's economy and culture.

"The project will be conducted in two parts," says **SVTP Executive Director Lea King**. "In Part 1 high school students will be asked to interview their family elders as part of StoryCorps' **Great Thanksgiving Listen** and participate in a district-wide competition. In Part 2, those selected from Part 1 will create compelling videos that will capture their families' journeys".

Project "Rafiki" aims to capture the rich cultural heritage of our community and is also an effort to celebrate immigrant achievement and memorialize the collective wisdom of our elders. The project gives young people an opportunity to engage and connect with those close to them in a meaningful way and across generational boundaries to gain insight into their families' unique backgrounds and journeys.

"The Great Thanksgiving Listen will foster meaningful connections within families, communities and classrooms, and has the potential to strengthen our national fabric at a time when we desperately need it," said **Dave Isay, Founder and President of Story Corps**. "Students will come away from the project not only knowing more about their elders, and having reminded them that their lives and stories matter, but also having experienced first-hand the power of listening to bring people together."

With the consent of all participants, interviews can be entered into the StoryCorps archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and on StoryCorps.me where they become an invaluable resource for future historians and provide families with a priceless piece of personal history.

"We're proud of our cultural fabric that blends the heritages from many around the world, and I believe our city's diversity and combined immigrant story make us even greater," said **San José Mayor Sam Liccardo**.

**Chris Funk, ESUHSD Superintendent**, notes: "There is no better way to bring history alive than to engage with our elders about their past. The Rafiki project will help to tell the story of our immigrant heritage in the great city of San Jose and the magnificence of the East Side."

**Nancy Albarrán, Superintendent for SJUSD**, says: "SJUSD is excited to be part of Project "Rafiki" - programs like this underline the diverse nature of our district and provide students and their families with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to share and celebrate their unique heritage."

**Zulma Maciel, Assistant to the City Manager who leads San Jose's Office of Immigrant Affairs** says: "The San Jose's new Office of Immigrant Affairs aims to facilitate the integration of immigrants into our community. By lifting stories of our immigrant families we recognize their important contributions and demonstrate that we are a welcoming community that values diversity."

For additional information, please reach out to Lea King, Executive Director at the Silicon Valley Talent Partnership. She may be reached at [Lea@SVTPCA.ORG](mailto:Lea@SVTPCA.ORG) or (408) 326-2348 x 200

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### **About Silicon Valley Talent Partnership**

Silicon Valley Talent Partnership creates, sources and manages innovative and meaningful pro-bono partnerships between highly skilled private-sector volunteers and public-sector workers, capitalizing on the unique opportunity to restore local government and public agencies' capacity to innovate, enhance service delivery and ultimately improve the quality of life of residents and communities across Silicon Valley. To learn more, go to [www.svt pca.org](http://www.svt pca.org) or connect us on Twitter (@svtpca) and Facebook (Silicon Valley Talent Partnership).

### **About the City of San José**

Known as the Capital of Silicon Valley, San José is the nation's tenth largest city and the largest city in Northern California with an ethnically diverse population of 1,000,000. San José was founded in 1777, once served as the state capital of California, and now encompasses 180 square miles. The City's website is [www.sanjoseca.gov](http://www.sanjoseca.gov).

### **About East Side Union High School District**

The **East Side Union High School District** (ESUHSD) administrates 16 high schools with a combined enrollment of approximately 24,500 students in the area of [San Jose, Santa Clara County, California](#). Demographic breakdown: 40.9% - Hispanic; 27.4% - Asian; 15.5% - European American; 10% - Filipino; 4.7% - African American. The schools include 11 comprehensive or traditional and 7 alternative high school programs. Chris Funk is the district's superintendent. <http://www.esuhd.org/>

### **About San Jose Unified School District**

**San José Unified** is the largest school district in Silicon Valley, serving a diverse population of nearly 32,000 students from TK-12 at 41 schools from Downtown San José south to Almaden Valley.

### **About the Office of Immigrant Affairs of the City of San Jose**

The Mayor and City Council approved the establishment of the Office of Immigrant Affairs to make San Jose a more inclusive place for all residents. The City Manager's Office have been working with key stakeholders since August 2015 to develop a three-year immigrant integration plan that will recommend goals and objectives to create a more welcoming environment and improve the quality of life of immigrants. <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=4615>

### **About StoryCorps**

Founded in 2003, the nonprofit organization StoryCorps has given more than 250,000 people the chance to record interviews about their lives, pass wisdom from one generation to the next, and leave a legacy for the future. StoryCorps shares edited excerpts of these recordings with millions each week through popular weekly NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.

**The Great Thanksgiving Listen** is a national education project from StoryCorps that empowers high school students to create an oral history of the contemporary United States by recordings an interview with an elder over Thanksgiving weekend using the StoryCorps App. For more information, visit [thegreatlisten.org](http://thegreatlisten.org)