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School of Imagination

*bringing out the extraordinary in every child*

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**The School of Imagination Announces “Bright Beginnings” Event to Address Autism Early Detection, Provide Free Screenings and Educational Workshops for Families at Risk**

*Leading Advocates and Community Leaders Including Congressman Jerry McNerney and Dublin Mayor Janet Lockhart Join Hands to Make a Difference for Bay Area Children*

**DUBLIN, Calif. – May 1, 2008** – The School of Imagination (SOI) announced today an important event to address the topic of autism early detection and will provide educational community workshops that will extend its reach to thousands of high-risk families. The award-winning School of Imagination is partnering with leading advocates and physicians including Autism Speaks, California First Five, Regional Center of the East Bay, Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation, Congressman Jerry McNerney and Dublin Mayor Janet Lockhart to bring awareness, education, early detection and intervention programs for children in the Bay Area..

"The School of Imagination has touched the lives of so many children in our community by providing them the skills and confidence they need to succeed in all educational settings," said Congressman, Jerry McNerney. "I'm pleased that now the school is reaching out to families in our district by partnering with advocates and practitioners to hold the Bright Beginnings event, raising awareness and providing education and support for children on the autism spectrum."

With the explosion of autism cases, now reportedly 1 in 150 cases in the U.S. and with the highest concentration in Northern California, SOI has been at the forefront, serving the needs of children with developmental disabilities and delays, as well as typically developing children in the Tri-Valley area and has improved the lives of more than 2,500 children with autism, speech delays and developmental disabilities.

**Bright Beginnings Event – Screening Children, Educating Families, Changing Futures**

To reach more families and to continue to provide much needed programs the school will host a three-day fundraising and informational event, *Bright Beginnings*, slated for May 15-17. The event will kick off at the 2nd Annual School of Imagination Golf Tournament at the Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton, Calif. on Thursday May 15, at 10:45 a.m. All proceeds will go toward funding a permanent home for the School of Imagination. The school, which serves more than 300 children each week, is currently housed in temporary classrooms in Dublin's Crosswinds Church.

On day two of the event, parents concerned about possible developmental delays can bring their child on Friday, May 16 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. for a free screening with a speech therapist and pediatrician. If autism or other developmental delays are suspected, parents will be counseled on where to turn for further help and referrals. Representatives from leading child advocacy groups will provide information and help educate parents about the resources available to their families. Free childcare will be provided.

"Bright Beginnings" will conclude on May 17 with a day of educational seminars for parents, teachers and other professionals. Parents will learn about a range of child development topics, including developmental milestones, navigating resources for children with autism, and children's dietary needs. Seminars run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **About The School of Imagination**

The School of Imagination provides a small class size of 10 children with a student to teacher ratio of 4:1 or less. The curriculum consists of both structured and hands-on project learning opportunities tailored for ALL children. We implement "Zoo-phonics" and "HighReach Learning" programs into our theme-based, individualized curriculum as well as play skills, and encouragement of independence. Teamwork centers are a part of the program to develop fine motor, sensory skills, sequencing, artistic expression, music awareness, math, and science. We provide small class sizes and individualized attention with fun and unique hands-on learning strategies for all children! The School of Imagination is an inclusion program that allows your child to develop the skills and confidence to succeed in all educational settings. Designated a Champion of the "Learn the Signs, Act Early" Campaign by Center for Disease Control, the School of Imagination is a national role model for inclusion programs. Together with the support of the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation, California First Five, and the California Speech and Hearing Association, School of Imagination is committed to bring out the extraordinary in every child. For more information, or to reach our Parent Support Network, contact us at (877) KIDS-TLC or [www.schoolofimagination.org](http://www.schoolofimagination.org).