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CITIZENSHIP**

*Preparing Youth for Today's World  
and Tomorrow's Responsibilities*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CALIFORNIA FACES SERIOUS ISSUES OF  
JUSTICE, FAIRNESS & EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

On May 17, 2007, distinguished state and national leaders along with over 800 students and teachers will join with the Center for Youth Citizenship (CYC) to bring citizenship education alive through film, arts, and community dialogue. The **Highest Office: Citizen** Forum will draw citizens of all ages together to celebrate and discuss character-based citizenship® education and recognize recipients of CYC's Highest Office: Citizen Award.

This year's speaker is inspirational educator Erin Gruwell, subject of the acclaimed film **Freedom Writers**, starring Hilary Swank. Gruwell will speak about how she helped change the lives of her students by encouraging them to question long-held stereotypes, address their deepest struggles, and ultimately rechart their futures to become critical thinkers, aspiring college students, and citizens for change. She has since spread a message on the importance of education, tolerance, and leadership on such programs as *Oprah*, *The View*, and *Good Morning America*.

At the evening event, CYC will also present its **Highest Office: Citizen** award to Dr. Rex Fortune in recognition of his contributions to enhancing justice, fairness and equity through his founding of the *Project Pipeline Teacher Credential Program*. This comprehensive teacher recruitment and district intern credential program's mission is to provide eligible individuals an affordable and convenient way to earn a California teaching credential while also meeting California's demand for new teachers. A life-long educator who has a keen interest in improving the performance of low achieving students, Dr. Fortune co-authored *Leadership on Purpose: Promising Practices from Effective Schools*, which demonstrates how high achievement can exist in high-poverty, high-minority schools.

**Highest Office: Citizen** is presented by the Center for Youth Citizenship in partnership with a broad base of community supporters, including the California Reading Lions Center, Sacramento County Office of Education, California Department of Education, various Chambers of Commerce, districts and school in the greater Sacramento region, and other community leaders and organizations.

For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact Dr. Joseph P. Maloney, Executive Director of the Center for Youth Citizenship, at (916) 228-2322, [cyc@scoe.net](mailto:cyc@scoe.net) or visit [www.youthcitizenship.org](http://www.youthcitizenship.org).

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