



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SAN FRANCISCO-BASED HELEN DILLER FAMILY FOUNDATION AWARDS FIVE CALIFORNIA TEENS WITH \$36,000 EACH**

### **Young Visionaries Receive Major Funding to Expand Community Service Commitments**

*~ Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders to "Repair the World" Today ~*

**SAN FRANCISCO, July 21, 2009**—The Helen Diller Family Foundation and The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties today announced the 2009 recipients of the prestigious Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Award. Now in its third year, the award recognizes teens from throughout California who have initiated an exceptional social action project that helps to repair and make the world a better place. Five outstanding teens will receive an award of \$36,000, which will be presented at a luncheon in San Francisco on August 31, 2009.

#### **Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Award winners for 2009 are:**

- **Max Einhorn from La Jolla/San Diego (age 18)**
- **Eric Feldman from Palos Verdes Estates (age 18)**
- **Aaron Feuer from Los Angeles (age 18)**
- **Jacqueline Rotman from Santa Barbara (age 17)**
- **Erin Schrode from Ross/Marin County (age 18)**

*Tikkun olam* is a Hebrew phrase that means *repair the world*; it signifies one of the basic precepts of Judaism. "Our goal is to empower tomorrow's leaders as their visions for repairing the world unfold," said Helen Diller, president of the sponsoring foundation. "This award reflects our confidence in these five exceptional young Californians—we hope it will serve as a springboard for them to continue the outstanding work they've begun in the spirit of *tikkun olam*, and enable each to make a lasting and meaningful impact on the world and future generations."

The awardees' projects included a national teen focused eco-awareness campaign; an entrepreneurial partnership that provided disaster awareness kits during California's devastating wildfires; interactive hip-hop dance troupes for at-risk urban kids; musical fundraisers that provided education for Kenyan orphans, and a statewide initiative that empowered students to call for policies to improve their schools. Each project required leadership and careful organization in addition to fundraising. Use of the award money is unrestricted, though recipients are encouraged to use the funding for college or to further implement a vision for making the world a better place.

More than 135 teens competed for the five honors, which were awarded by a selection committee composed of educators and community leaders from the San Francisco Bay Area, Fresno, San Jose, Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange Counties. To be eligible, teens could self-nominate, or be nominated by an adult and complete a detailed application describing their projects, its goals, their inspiration and challenges, fundraising tactics and ultimate accomplishments.

Nominees were required to be California residents, between 13 and 19 years old, and self-identify as Jewish. While nominees had to be Jewish, their community service projects can benefit the general community.

The awards are funded by the Helen Diller Family Foundation, a supporting foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties.

### **2009 Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Award Recipients and their Projects:**

#### **Max Einhorn (La Jolla): Founder of “Disaster Aware” and La Jolla High School’s Entrepreneurs Club**

The devastation and destruction caused by wildfires ripping through San Diego County in 2007, opened Max Einhorn’s eyes to an alarming truth: how few of his fellow San Diegans were adequately prepared for natural disasters—and how that lack of preparedness presents a grave danger for everyone. “I looked into buying a disaster kit for my family, and then realized that no one had one,” Max said. Max worked entrepreneurially with the American Red Cross and his high school to start a social business called “Disaster Aware.” The group raised more than \$10,000 for San Diego’s 2-1-1 service, educated more than 1600 families about natural disasters, and has sold more than 300 customized disaster survival kits. Under Max’s leadership, a sustainable “Disaster Aware” business model and educational materials have been presented to, and adopted by, many area groups, businesses and schools.

#### **Eric Feldman (Palos Verdes Estates): “Just One Night” Fundraising Concerts for Orphaned Children in Kenya**

By producing Jazz and classical music concerts, coordinating school assemblies and pursuing corporate sponsorships, Eric Feldman has raised nearly \$40,000 to sponsor the education of seven orphaned children in Kenya. Eric was inspired by his grandfather and other members of his family who taught him about *tikkun olam* as he “tagged along to see my father’s patients, deliver Meals-on-Wheels, and visit half-way houses.” What started as a dream to save just one child after Eric read about the lack of education available to African orphans became “Just One Night,” his first fundraiser, reflecting the knowledge that one night of giving would change a child’s life forever. He even engaged his nine year old sister and organized a read-a-thon at her elementary school, and arranged for the Kenya Boys’ Choir to perform at his high school.

#### **Aaron Feuer (Los Angeles): President, California Association of Student Councils**

With new budget cuts of \$650 million (added to \$11 billion previous cuts) for California public schools, education will depend more and more on compromise and community action. Aaron Feuer recognized the need early on to engage and empower students of all socioeconomic backgrounds and help them to improve their schools and fight for dynamic policy change “from the ground up.” He’s focused on “reinvigorating our student councils as the vehicles for change, providing leadership training for students from all backgrounds and giving students from across the academic and socioeconomic spectrum opportunities to lead and speak up about important school issues.” He initiated and organized the first Los Angeles Youth Summit, doubled participation in the California Association of Student Council’s leadership training programs, added 17 new leadership training programs, and coordinated two statewide conferences that resulted in presentations to The State Board of Education and several pieces of new legislation including a pending Senate bill that will enable student-teacher feedback.

#### **Jacqueline Rotman (Santa Barbara): “Everybody Dance Now!” Positive Outlets for At-Risk Youth**

Inspired to take action at a young age, Jackie was just twelve years old when her dance group performed a hip-hop routine for eighty teens with disabilities. When the audio system failed, she instinctively took the lead and adapted the performance “by inviting audience members onstage to have their own opportunity to express themselves freely through movement.” Five years later, she hasn’t forgotten “the way it felt to see those teenagers full of self-confidence and adrenaline from

dancing.” Since 2005, “Everybody Dance Now!” has sought to provide a positive creative outlet for nearly 2,000 Santa Barbara young people considered destined for membership in gangs. Through this program Jackie helps combat peer pressure, build self-esteem and foster healthy lifestyles, while promoting diversity and global culture by offering world dance classes and community service outreach to the elderly, terminally ill and disabled.

**Erin Schrode (Ross): “Teens Turning Green” and “Teens for Safe Cosmetics”**

Erin sees herself as “the ultimate green girl,” for whom “eco-consciousness forms the lens through which I view my entire life.” This young eco-renaissance woman from Marin County is the founding member and spokesperson for “Teens Turning Green,” a national teen movement focused on transforming the world by investigating harmful environmental exposures, advocating for policy and behavioral change and creating awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. She’s as passionate about going to battle with financially powerful companies producing “toxin-ridden products,” as she is penning her weekly column for the *Marin Independent Journal* or her “Sustainable Beauty” blog. She’s inspired millions of teens about sustainability, race awareness and other issues with national media appearances ranging from *E! Entertainment*, *ABC News* and *Planet Green*, to *Family Circle*, *Seventeen*, *The New York Times* and *Teen Vogue*.

The Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards initiative is one of a number of projects funded by the Helen Diller Family Foundation through the Jewish Community Endowment Fund to develop leadership in teens and enhance Jewish education.

For more information on this year’s Diller Teen *Tikkun Olam* Awards, please visit [www.sfjcf.org/diller/teenawards](http://www.sfjcf.org/diller/teenawards) or contact Rebecca Freed at (212) 561-7456 or [Rebecca.Freed@morris-king.com](mailto:Rebecca.Freed@morris-king.com).

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