



## *The Isabel Allende Foundation*

### **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 26, 2003

CONTACT: Lori Barra, *Executive Director*

lori@isabelallendefoundation.org

415.289.0992

### **Isabel Allende Grants Awards for Peace**

*Best-Selling Author Honors Nine Nonprofits*

SAUSALITO, CA, SEPTEMBER 26—Isabel Allende, internationally acclaimed author, today announced the recipients of the Isabel Allende Foundation's 2003 Espiritu Awards. The announcement follows an international book tour for Allende's most recent book, *My Invented Country*. Nine nonprofit groups, most located in the San Francisco Bay Area, will be honored with grants of \$10,000 for their work.

In 2001, the Isabel Allende Foundation established the Espiritu Awards to celebrate and financially support nonprofits working in the areas of literacy, education, the protection of women and children, health, and the pursuit of peace.

"Against a backdrop of war in Iraq, terrorism, and dangerously unsettled conditions around the globe, it is critical that this year's awards support peace in families, communities, and the world," says Allende. "This year's honorees all share a strong commitment to promoting and preserving peace. In this time of violence, we must support those groups dedicated to the resolution of conflict without violence."

The 2003 Espiritu Award recipients are:

- **Peace and Participation:** MoveOn ([www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)) and True Majority ([www.truemajority.org](http://www.truemajority.org))
- **Peace and Diplomacy:** The Carter Center ([www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org))
- **Peace and the Dismantling of Arms:** Ploughshares Fund ([www.ploughshares.org](http://www.ploughshares.org))
- **Peace and the Protection of Children:** Edgewood Center for Children and Families ([www.edgewoodcenter.org](http://www.edgewoodcenter.org)) and Huckleberry Youth Program, VIP Girls (Violence is Preventable) Program ([www.huckleberryyouth.org](http://www.huckleberryyouth.org))
- **Peace and the Protection of Women:** Empona Foundation ([www.empona.org](http://www.empona.org))
- **Peace and the Written Word:** 826 Valencia ([www.826valencia.org](http://www.826valencia.org)) and Writers Corps ([www.writerscorps-sf.org](http://www.writerscorps-sf.org))

Isabel Allende established her foundation in 1996, to pay homage to her deceased daughter, Paula Frias. Says Allende, "Paula taught me the two mottos by which my life and foundation are led. 'We only have what we give' and 'When in doubt ask yourself the question, What is the most generous thing to do in this case?'"

The awards are being given on September 28, 2003. More information about Isabel Allende and the Foundation can be found at **[www.isabelallendefoundation.org](http://www.isabelallendefoundation.org)**.

/...more

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and Participation** is presented to **MoveOn** for organizing advocacy and grassroots campaigns, many of which promote peace.

FROM ISABEL: “MoveOn is a stellar example of how a very small number of committed individuals can have a profound impact. The genius of this organization is that with very limited resources it created an online activist community unlike anything that has ever existed before. MoveOn is doing an excellent job of giving voice to those who oppose the choice of violence as foreign policy. I sincerely hope MoveOn continues to grow and give voice to millions of caring people worldwide.”

MoveOn supports citizens in finding their political voice. Its international network of more than 2 million online activists is a uniquely effective and responsive outlet for democratic participation. When broad public opinion and legislative action are disconnected, MoveOn builds electronic advocacy groups to examine the relevant issues. Examples of such issues are campaign finance, environmental and energy challenges, and nuclear disarmament. Once a group is assembled, MoveOn provides information and tools to help each individual have the greatest possible impact. CONTACT: [www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and Participation** is also presented to **True Majority** for its efforts to create a positive blueprint for moving forward in the post 9/11 world through citizen education and engagement.

FROM ISABEL: “True Majority makes it possible for citizens to understand and speak out about very important—and often unpublicized—decisions before the Congress and Senate. Compassion, charity, and justice are values held dear by peace-loving people around the world.”

True Majority brings citizens back into the political process. By researching issues, alerting its membership by email, and making it literally a one-click process for individuals to contact their representatives, True Majority has energized a whole new form of activism. True Majority’s underlying philosophy is contained in its Ten Principles, a positive blueprint for moving forward in the post-9/11 world. These principles reflect the values we must adhere to in order to build a safer, more secure home and world. These principles are also revenue-neutral, meaning the investments proposed are entirely funded by reductions in unnecessary spending on Cold War-era weapons that no longer contribute to our national security. CONTACT: [www.truemajority.org](http://www.truemajority.org)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and Diplomacy** is presented to **The Carter Center** to support its work preventing and resolving conflicts, enhancing freedom and democracy, and improving health worldwide.

FROM ISABEL: “The Carter Center has been a leader in nonviolent conflict resolution. I applaud its courage, vision, groundbreaking work worldwide and unwavering commitment to peace.”

The Carter Center, whose board of directors is chaired by President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn, is guided by a commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering. It seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health globally. In the center’s own words, “Peace is more than the absence of conflict. It encompasses democratic ideals and protection of human rights. Not only does the lack of peace often lead to poverty, it is as well one of poverty’s many symptoms. Building peace and cultivating democracy prevents conflict and instability, improves governance, and strengthens the rule of law. When citizens are empowered, they use their voices to influence policy, protect human rights, and hold their governments accountable.” CONTACT: [www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and the Dismantling of Arms** is presented to the **Ploughshares Fund** for trying to stop the spread of weapons of war, from nuclear arms to land mines.

FROM ISABEL: "Thousands of civilians, mainly children, are killed or maimed by land mines. Millions of these mines have been planted in several countries and they are waiting to explode. The work of Ploughshares Fund is essential; this organization supports over 100 initiatives aimed at removing land mines and ending the spread of weapons of war."

As a public grantmaking foundation, Ploughshares sees itself as a "mutual fund for security." It pools many small grants with other funds so as to have a very large impact. It has worked relentlessly to: promote public understanding and participation in the problem of weapons; stop the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons; prevent regional and global conflict; and address the terrible environmental legacy of the nuclear age.

CONTACT: [www.ploughshares.org](http://www.ploughshares.org)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and the Protection of Children** is presented to **Edgewood Center for Children and Families**, a violence-free home for children. Children who have suffered abuse, neglect, and violence find refuge and begin to heal in the environment provided by this center.

FROM ISABEL: "Peace starts at home. Therefore, raising children without violence and strengthening families is essential. This is what the staff of Edgewood have been doing for more than 150 years."

Edgewood Center for Children and Families has been serving the needs of the Bay Area's most at-risk children since 1851. Originally founded as an orphanage during the Gold Rush, Edgewood in the 1950s evolved into a nonprofit residential and day treatment facility for severely emotionally disturbed and learning-disabled children, ages 6 to 14, most of whom have suffered parental abuse, neglect, or prenatal substance exposure. Edgewood provides shelter, counseling, treatment, and education for children, and specialized programs for families, all with the goal of mainstreaming children back into their communities. CONTACT: [www.edgewoodcenter.org](http://www.edgewoodcenter.org)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and the Protection of Children** is also presented to Huckleberry Youth Programs to support its **VIP Girls (Violence is Preventable) Program**, which assists young women who are at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.

FROM ISABEL: "Violence affects women profoundly. Women and girls have to be protected from violence and that is what Huckleberry Youth Programs is doing."

Founded as an initiative of Huckleberry Youth Programs, the VIP Girls Program helps young women, ages 11-18, from all ethnic backgrounds and all parts of San Francisco. It provides counseling, case management, therapy, mentoring, personal development, employment, shelter, family mediation, parenting classes, peer education, and a wide range of other services to assist hundreds of young women and their families in breaking the cycles of violence in their lives.

CONTACT: [www.huckleberryyouth.org/vip.html](http://www.huckleberryyouth.org/vip.html)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and the Protection of Women** is presented to **Empona Foundation** to support its Weekend Screening Clinics and Midweek Diagnostic Procedures for uninsured women in Marin County seeking mammograms and breast cancer diagnostics.

FROM ISABEL: "This country spends too much waging war and too little protecting the underprivileged. Disease prevention and healthcare have become the preserve of the affluent. Peace is also a matter of justice and equality. A single person can make a difference. I am touched by the fact that Empona's young and hopeful founder is using her talent and energy to advocate for healthcare for all. I hope this initiative will grow in scope and be replicated across the country."

Empona Foundation was created to bridge the gap between the uninsured and quality healthcare, and to empower individuals with education and support. Its goal is to identify gaps in healthcare for underserved communities and create and fund specific programs to fill those gaps. To date, this new foundation is providing free breast screenings and follow-up diagnostic procedures for uninsured women in Marin County, a county with one of the highest rates of breast cancer in the world. CONTACT: [www.empona.org](http://www.empona.org)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and the Written Word** is presented to **826 Valencia** to support its programs helping low-income students with their writing skills by, among many other things, publishing a quarterly journal with student essays on the theme of peace.

FROM ISABEL: "The written word empowered me by giving me a voice. Telling my own story has given me strength and a place in the world. I wish everybody, especially underprivileged kids, could develop self-confidence through writing, as I did. 826 Valencia is teaching young children and young adults to do so. This year the students will be writing about their ideas and feelings regarding peace and their work will be published. I know this will empower them and inspire other kids."

826 Valencia helps low-income students, ages 8-18, with their writing skills, in the realm of creative writing, or with English as a second language. Its staff and volunteers work in a fresh, dynamic, and creative environment. Founded by author Dave Eggers, 826 Valencia offers free drop-in tutoring, workshops, and storytelling, and helps students create their own story collections, zines, and other publications. Its facilities are available as a free publishing resource, and its volunteers assist with school and extracurricular student publications. CONTACT: [www.826valencia.org](http://www.826valencia.org)

**The Espiritu Award for Peace and the Written Word** is also presented to **Writers Corps** (San Francisco) for helping underserved youth in low-income neighborhoods improve their writing. This year Writers Corps will celebrate its tenth anniversary by publishing a collection of student writings on peace.

FROM ISABEL: "Writing about one's feelings is an effective antidote to helplessness and fear; Writers Corps is working wonders to help students realize their own powers of eloquence. I am so glad that the celebration of their first ten years will be a publication about peace."

The mission of Writers Corp is to transform individuals and communities through the written word. As the local branch of a national alliance its goals include: improving the learning attitude, ability, and self-sufficiency of underserved youth in low-income neighborhoods, and increasing community awareness and understanding of the lives of youth through Writers Corps publications and special events. By assisting underrepresented and often unseen individuals to find a voice to express an inner truth, Writers Corps improves literacy and transforms lives. CONTACT: [www.writerscorps-sf.org](http://www.writerscorps-sf.org)