N E W S RELEASE

Contra Costa County
JOHN GIOIA (joy-a)
Chair, Board of Supervisors

For more information contact:
Terrance Cheung – Chief of Staff
415-990-2087 cell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 15, 2010

WEST COUNTY KICKS OFF HEARTSAFE COMMUNITY PROGRAM AND CHALLENGES CITIES AND COMMUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

What: HeartSafe Community Initiative Kick-Off and Challenge
Where: El Cerrito City Hall, 10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA
Who: County Supervisor John Gioia; El Cerrito Mayor Janet Abelson; Chief Lance Maples, El Cerrito Fire Department; Pam Dodson, Contra Costa County Emergency Medical Services; American Medical Response (AMR); Chevron; family of David Gurganious, 15-year-old survivor of cardiac arrest
When: Monday, March 15, 2010
12 noon

El Cerrito, Calif., Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia will be joined by city leaders, emergency services experts, Chevron representatives, and community residents to kick-off West County's HeartSafe Community program and to challenge other West County cities and communities to participate.

Sudden cardiac arrest strikes people of all ages and often without warning. The victim's heart stop beating and they stop breathing. The chances of surviving sudden cardiac arrest are increased if 9-1-1 is called, CPR and defibrillation are applied, and paramedics arrive. But not everyone knows what to do if they see someone suffering from cardiac arrest.

That's why leaders and stakeholders in West Contra Costa County including Supervisor Gioia are joining together to call attention to the lifesaving program.

HeartSafe Community is a Countywide awareness program to educate residents about identifying the symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest and responding quickly so the chances of someone suffering from an emergency will have the best chances of survival.

Quick response is what saved 15-year-old David Gurganius' life last month after he collapsed from an apparent heart condition at a basketball game. El Cerrito firefighters and paramedics arrived at the El Cerrito High gym within six-minutes of receiving the 9-1-1 call from emergency dispatch.

"Attendees at the game knew to call 9-1-1 when they saw David suffering from the cardiac arrest," said Supervisor Gioia, whose district includes El Cerrito and is this year's Chair of the Board of Supervisors. "I have no doubt their quick action saved David's life."

Shortly after the incident in early February, the Chevron Richmond Refinery agreed to donate defibrillators to schools in West Contra Costa Unified School District.

For Supervisor Gioia, education and awareness of cardiovascular disease is personal. His father died from a heart attack in 1987. Supervisor Gioia has been a strong proponent of installing defibrillators at public places.

"Saving the life of someone suffering a cardiac arrest is everyone's responsibility," said Supervisor Gioia.

Current West County partners include the unincorporated community of El Sobrante, the City of El Cerrito, the West Contra Costa Unified School District, and the Chevron Richmond Refinery.

Immediately following the announcement and call to action, El Cerrito Mayor Janet Abelson will be installing City Hall's new defibrillator.

###

11780 San Pablo Avenue, Suite D, El Cerrito, CA 94530
Phone (510) 374-3231 • Fax: (510) 374-3429