



PARAMOUNT BARD

A C A D E M Y

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rob Six
rsix@roll.com
310.966.3517 or
310.384.3057

PARAMOUNT BARD ACADEMY CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

Innovative Charter School Has Goal that Students Will Complete 30 Credit Hours of College Course Work by the Time They Graduate

Delano, CA (October 29, 2009) -- Paramount Bard Academy celebrated its official grand opening today with dignitaries from the community, the US Department of Education, Paramount Agricultural Companies and Bard College in attendance. The ceremony featured remarks by owners of Paramount Agricultural Companies Stewart and Lynda Resnick; President of Bard College Leon Botstein; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Rural Outreach at the US Department of Education John White; Principal of the Academy Brent Malicote; Bard College Dean of Teacher Education Ric Campbell; and several student representatives. Tours of the school followed the ceremony.

The academy -- a collaborative effort between the Resnick Foundation, the Delano community, Paramount Agricultural Companies and Bard College -- opened its doors for the school year on August 3, 2009 to 100 sixth and ninth graders. It expects to grow 200 students a year until it reaches a capacity of 700 students in grades 6-12 in the 2012-13 school year. The school is committed to graduating students with a minimum of 30 hours of college credit, prepared to advance to college and complete post-secondary degrees. A primary goal of the Academy is to graduate no less than 95% of all students with the expectation that 75% or more of these students will go on to graduate from college.

"The Paramount Bard Academy is a school where daily lessons are filled with problem solving and deep thinking," said Brent Malicote, Principal of Paramount Bard Academy. "Our success is fueled by the high expectations that our students and staff have for themselves and each other. As our school continues to grow and develop, we expect to become a

center for innovation and top performance in both teaching and learning in the Central Valley and beyond.”

As one of the largest agricultural employers in the San Joaquin Valley, Paramount Agricultural Companies continue to support educational programming and seeks to establish new opportunities to actively engage children and increase educational outcomes for families. “We deeply believe in the importance of education and providing opportunity and growth for the families in the Central Valley,” said owners Stewart and Lynda Resnick. “We hope that Paramount Bard Academy will have a major impact on the Delano community and be a place where young people, their families and friends come to learn, communicate, grow and lay the foundation for future success in life.”

The Resnicks support a variety of programs from the schools in Avenal, Delano, Del Rey, Lost Hills, Shafter, Kettleman City and Earlimart; to providing college scholarships for employees’ children who maintain a 2.8 GPA; to funding Valley Children’s Hospital, the Boys and Girls Clubs, school fitness centers, after school reading programs, and restoring arts and music to the elementary schools.

The uniqueness of Paramount Bard Academy is that it shares a common campus and will benefit from the active presence and participation of the Bard College Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program. Creating a school in which the students and faculty of a graduate teacher education program are participating members of the teaching and learning community contributes to the development of innovative curricula and pedagogy while effectively increasing the capacity of the school to deliver forms of instruction that are responsive to the individual needs of public school students.

“We’re proud to participate with the Paramount Agricultural Companies in creating this groundbreaking private/public venture, which will work to improve educational opportunities for citizens in this region,” said Bard College President Leon Botstein .

The Bard College MAT program recently received an \$8.1 million Teacher Quality Partnership grant from the US Department of Education. This grant will allow Bard to provide a residency stipend to those graduate students participating in the MAT program in the Central Valley of California. The Bard MAT program will begin during the 2010-2011 school year.

“There is growing recognition that school improvement depends on well educated teachers,” said Ric Campbell, Dean of Teacher Education at Bard College. “Being able to provide a model of educational excellence in a public school environment is a key component of our work in Delano, California. As a center for educational leadership, the common campus of the Paramount Bard Academy and Bard's Master of Arts in Teaching Program will provide support for the continued improvement of teaching and learning throughout the Central Valley.”

About Paramount Bard Academy

The Paramount Bard Academy is a public charter school registered with the California Department of Education and opened in August 2009 in Delano, California. The Paramount Bard Academy is a joint project between the Delano community, Paramount Agricultural Companies and Bard College. The Paramount Bard Academy is committed to graduating students with a minimum of 30 hours of college credit, prepared to advance to college and complete post secondary degrees. A primary goal of the Academy is to graduate no less than 95% of all students with the expectation that 75% or more of these students will go on to graduate from college.

About Paramount Farming Company

The arid climate and fertile soil of California's San Joaquin Valley provide perfect conditions for growing almonds, pistachios, and pomegranates (Wonderful variety) for processing and sales by their affiliated companies. The goal of Paramount Farming is to improve on nature where they can nurture approximately 90,000 acres with the best of care. A proud industry leader in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Paramount Farming carefully selects orchard locations and combines agricultural science with ecological responsibility.

About the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program at Bard College

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program, founded in 2003, responds to an urgent need for change in public education. Bard's MAT Program engages students, faculty, and public school teachers in advancing the best ideas about teacher preparation and the improvement of secondary and postsecondary education. It offers the one-year M.A.T. program at its campuses in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, and Delano, California. The Bard MAT also offers a two-year M.A.T. program, and a five-year combined program leading to the bachelor of arts and master of arts in teaching degrees to Bard undergraduates at its Annandale-on-Hudson campus. In partnership with the Bard Center for Environmental Policy, students may apply for a two-year dual degree program (master of science in environmental policy and master of arts in teaching). All programs of study include integrated course work, student teaching, and independent research, and upon satisfactory completion of these programs, MAT graduates from the Campus in Delano will receive a master of arts in teaching degree and a California Teacher Credential in Adolescent Education (grades 7-12) in one of four areas: English, mathematics, biology, and history. www.bard.edu/mat/

###