

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**CALIFORNIA'S BRIGHTEST YOUNG ARTISTS
HONORED AS CALIFORNIA ARTS SCHOLARS
San Francisco Talent Recognized
by California State Summer School for the Arts**

Twenty-six San Francisco youth artists have been accepted into the prestigious California State Summer School for the Arts (CSSSA). They compiled their portfolios, had their paintings, drawings, films, videos and sculptures analyzed by the best in the business, had their musical and theatrical performances reviewed by demanding professionals, and are to be honored for their achievement in the arts – at a remarkably young age. On **Thursday, May 31, 2001, 4-6 P.M. at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum**, these gifted high school artists will be awarded at a ceremony hosted by the San Francisco Arts Commission and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Education & Community Programs.

Chosen from over 1,300 applicants statewide, this year's California Arts Scholars from San Francisco include **William Lam** of Washington High School; **Jermaine LeBrane** and **Elizabeth Thompson** of Everett Middle School; **Quyen Chau** and **Jessica Chiang** of Lowell High School; **Sheila Moghaddam** and **Meghan Palma** of Saint Ignatius College Preparatory; **Max Zuckerman** of Lick-Wilmerding High School; **Chika Ogawa**, **Jordan Elkind**, **Sarah Adler-Milstein**, **Anna Vognsen** and **Hanna Hart** of San Francisco University High School; **Joan Winler** of Sacred Heart; **Tanya Wischerath** and **Derek Dabkoski** of Leadership Charter High School; and 10 students from the School of the Arts, **Jessica London Shields**, **Jennifer Tsuge**, **Tatiana Urriaga**, **Samuel Banning**, **Anna Blake**, **Maria Chan**, **Jesse Cottrell**, **Victoria Fong**, **Anna Gontar** and **Lindsey Hartley**.

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CSSSA offers a jump-start to talented teenagers wishing to pursue careers in the arts and entertainment industries. Only 500 of the 1,300 applicants will make it into the school this year. Compared to high school athletes who are routinely honored for achieving excellence, the Arts Scholars Awards ceremony is often the first time these young artists receive comparable praise—and these students have definitely earned it.

At the ceremony, students will be presented with a California State Governor's medallion and a certificate of recognition from the San Francisco Arts Commission. San Francisco Supervisor Gavin Newsom, California State Assemblyman Kevin Shelley and San Francisco Unified School District Board Member Dan Kelly are among the presenters and will be giving out the awards. The ceremony will include a performance by the Touch of Class Choir from Burton High School.

San Francisco's recognition ceremony is sponsored by the San Francisco Arts Commission in partnership with Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Education & Community Programs, and by a generous grant from Cal Fed. The school is supported by a unique public-private partnership between CSSSA and the private sector through donations to the California State Summer School Arts Foundation.

"CSSSA is an exceptional program that allows students to pursue their dreams while keeping the arts thriving in California," said Carl Webb, president and chief operating officer of Cal Fed. "It's a pleasure to support such a worthwhile cause."

Now celebrating its fifteenth year of discovering and nurturing young talent, CSSSA has helped 6,000 students with its rigorous pre-professional training programs in dance, animation, creative writing, visual art, music, film and video, theater, and fine crafts.

Many California Arts Scholars have gone on to achieve notoriety in the arts and entertainment industries. James Franco (Class of 1992) plays the title role in the new TNT movie *James Dean: An Invented Life* to air later this year, portrayed Daniel Desario

in the award-winning NBC series *Freaks and Geeks* and will soon be seen on screen with Robert De Niro in *City by the Sea*. Brandon Henschel (Class of 1995) is the lead dancer for pop star Britney Spears. CSSSA Alumnus Bobby Podesta, Mark Walsh and Stephen Gregory have all received Emmy awards for their animation and worked with CSSSA alumnus Sanjay Patel and Tasha Wedeen on *Toy Story*, *A Bug's Life* and *Toy Story II*. Sharon Grimsley (Class of 1995) is a Principal Soloist for the Houston Ballet. And Sokly Ny, a CSSSA film/video graduate won an Emmy for his documentary about his senior year in high school.

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