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**Words Alive awards \$30,000 in scholarships to college-bound
San Diego students**

San Diego, Calif. (June 1, 2016) — Words Alive, a leading nonprofit literacy organization that inspires a commitment to reading and develops shared reading experiences for children, youth and adults, has awarded a total of \$30,000 in scholarships to 11 outstanding students from the 22 San Diego County Juvenile Court and Community Schools. Each of the Words Alive Westreich Scholarship recipients will receive a scholarship award ranging from \$1250 to \$5,000 for the 2016-17 academic year.

The 2016 Words Alive Westreich Scholarship Program recipients are: **Trisha McElroy** of University of Southern California; **Rose Gonzalez** of San Diego State University; **Dezarae Frost** of San Jose State University; **Destiny Frost** of CSU Bakersfield, **Brittany Jackson** of University of California, Santa Cruz; **Zaphire Alonso Duarte, Felicia Hurtado, Danielle Mejia, Daimeon Rodriguez, Diana Gonzalez Soto** and **Itzel Vega** of San Diego City College

Unlike other scholarship programs, which typically fund only tuition, books and educational supplies, each recipient is eligible to receive funds to cover the cost of rent, food, childcare, clothing, travel and other living expenses. Additionally, the program matches each recipient with a mentor, who meets with his or her student throughout the school year, providing guidance, direction, and often times, a “shoulder” to lean on.

San Diego philanthropist Ruth Westreich created the Words Alive Westreich Scholarship Program in 2007, with the first scholarships awarded the following year. The program awards scholarships to Words Alive Adolescent Book Group program participants to support them in their pursuit of higher education at the college or vocational level.

“Words Alive is honored that Ruth Westreich and the Westreich Foundation established the Words Alive Westreich Scholarship,” said Words Alive founder and board member Leslye Lyons. “Their generosity has allowed us to help many bright, talented, dedicated teens achieve their educational goals. The whole community will benefit from what the students, in turn, offer back to all of us.”

To recognize the 2016-2017 scholarship recipients, Words Alive will host its annual Words Alive Westreich Scholarship Awards Ceremony on August 15 from 5:30-7pm at San Diego's new downtown Central Library, located at 330 Park Boulevard.

About Words Alive

Founded in 1999, Words Alive is a nonprofit organization that helps underserved, low-income, at-risk children, teens and families discover how books and reading can add meaning to their lives. Words Alive engages its program participants in developing a connection to reading with innovative programs and initiatives with the goal of creating lifelong readers and learners. For more information about Words Alive, its programs, volunteer opportunities and sponsorship opportunities, visit www.wordsalive.org.

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