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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Nature in Neighborhoods” Launch Party

Neighborhood residents, city officials, Pogo Park, YES, East Bay Regional Park District will celebrate a \$200,000 investment by the George Miller Youth Fund and The San Francisco Foundation to connect low-income kids in Richmond with nature.

Richmond, CA, June 15, 2016—The George Miller Youth Fund and The San Francisco Foundation will invest \$200,000 in two Richmond non-profits to provide underserved Richmond children with opportunities to connect with the natural world through a series of field-trips, camp-outs, and nature education classes led by naturalists and park rangers.

Congressman George Miller (Ret), served on the House Committee on Education and Labor throughout his 40-year career in Congress. During this time he also worked tirelessly to raise and invest money in a variety of programs to aid the children and youth of Contra Costa County. Now, the fund that bears his name donated \$50,000 to Pogo Park, a community development organization that’s rebuilt two city parks in Richmond’s Iron Triangle neighborhood, and \$50,000 to YES, a Richmond non-profit that provides youth with access to experiences in nature.

The San Francisco Foundation’s Youth Access to Nature Fund also awarded an identical \$100,000 grant to Pogo Park and YES. Together, these two grants compliment and support children from low-income communities in Richmond (who may not otherwise have the opportunity) to experience nature.

“There is a critical need for children, especially urban youth, to have a relationship with nature in order to eventually become stewards of the natural world,” said Congressman George Miller (Ret). “Many kids in Richmond have no contact with green environments; with forests, and rivers and mountains and fields. These grants and partnerships will provide hundreds of children living in Richmond’s tough central core neighborhoods with the opportunity to connect with nature right in their own neighborhood and beyond.”

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), the largest park district in the country, with more than 120,000 acres of parkland and 1,250 miles of trails, will also participate in the Nature in Neighborhoods initiative. EBRPD will send a team of naturalists to provide nature programming at Pogo Park. EBRPD will also launch a year-long adventure program that will bring YES youth on field trips to regional parks.

Pogo Park intends to use the funding from the George Miller Youth Fund to create a Nature Club that will provide unique study sessions and activities in the park including holding a camping night at Elm Playlot (the first "Pogo Park" in Richmond) under the stars complete with a campfire and s'mores, and visiting naturalists. Youth will participate in a series of "catch and release" activities to snag and study butterflies, beetles, moths and a variety of insects, among other programs.

YES will use its funding to build out its 10-year Youth Leadership Pathway that includes providing scholarships to graduating seniors who complete a passport of camp, outdoor leadership, and community service experiences. Additionally, the funding will launch the "Richmond Rangers" program between EBRP and YES where 11-13 year-old youth will partake in hiking, fishing, boating, and stewardship activities at local regional parks alongside park naturalists and recreation leaders.

A celebration of the George Miller Youth Fund's \$100,000 grant and The San Francisco Foundation's \$100,000 grant will take place at Pogo Park's Elm Playlot (corner of Elm Ave and 8th Avenue) in Richmond's Iron Triangle neighborhood from 5 to 6 pm on Tuesday, June 21st, the longest day of the year.

EBRPD's naturalists and rangers will bring their mobile visitors center to the Nature in Neighborhoods Launch Party. Pogo Park will run a nature play program and simulate a camping night at the park; YES will honor three college-bound graduates with \$1500 scholarships and share information with the public about its nature-based leadership programming.

There will be food, drink, music and several speeches from city officials, non-profit participants, local residents, and George Miller himself.

Pictures and interviewees will be available.