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LOWER-INCOME HIGH ACHIEVERS DEFY ADMISSIONS ODDS TO LAND AT NATION'S TOP COLLEGES

Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Announces 2008 College Scholarships

*Nurtured Through High School as Young Scholars,
28 Lower-Income Students Head to Elite Colleges with Top Scholarship Award;
Talents Range from Songwriting to Science*

Lansdowne, VA, May 12, 2008—Twenty-eight exceptional high school seniors from lower-income backgrounds today were named recipients of college scholarships from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, a nonprofit champion of high-achieving lower-income students. Drawn from the Foundation's prestigious Young Scholars Program, which provides personalized advising and financial support to promising students with limited financial means through all four years of high school, these students will receive scholarships of up to \$30,000 per year for four years.

The 2008 graduating class of high school seniors is the largest in US history, resulting in record-high rejection rates to colleges and universities. In this fiercely competitive environment, these 28 remarkable students have defied the odds to land at some of the nation's most prestigious institutions. More than one-third were admitted to the Ivy League, while others will attend such selective schools as Stanford University, Georgia Tech, and Swarthmore College.

"We have a pervasive and unfortunate expectation in this country that young people from lower-income backgrounds cannot learn at the highest levels," said Joshua Wyner, executive vice president of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. "These outstanding students are proof that when kids of great potential and limited means are consistently engaged and challenged educationally, they can excel."

The number of lower-income students admitted to the nation's most elite colleges remains disproportionately low. While about 35 percent of all undergraduate students nationally receive Pell grants (federal aid for low-income students), only about 7 percent of undergraduates at top US colleges are Pell grant recipients.

"In stripping me of the excuse of financial difficulties, the Young Scholars Program has shaped me to dream bigger and strive for my goals with unmatched passion and confidence," said Moeun Cha, a Young Scholar from Flushing, New York, who plans to attend Harvard University this fall.

Every year the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation welcomes a new group of promising lower-income seventh graders into the Young Scholars Program. In 2007, the average family income of Young Scholars joining the program was \$23,000.

The 2008 college scholarship winners are richly diverse, representing 21 US states and a wide range of backgrounds, talents and accomplishments. Well over half speak at least two languages. Nearly three-quarters play a musical instrument. Two appeared on “Jeopardy! Kids.” One was cast in an Off-Broadway play.

They are also committed to giving back, many having volunteered in their communities, across the country, and abroad. Anticipated majors range from art, architecture, and journalism to medicine, music, and political science.

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, a private foundation dedicated to helping young people of exceptional promise reach their full potential through education, supports Young Scholars through generous funding for their education, guidance from a dedicated staff of advisers, and supplementary educational services such as summer enrichment programs. The level of support each Scholar receives can range from \$100,000 to \$500,000, and last for as many as 15 years.

The Foundation provides individualized support tailored to the needs of each Young Scholar. Some have benefited from music lessons or the purchase of a laptop. Others have found help treating conditions such as dysgraphia and Asperger’s Syndrome. Summer experiences made possible for this year’s graduating class of Young Scholars include a trip to Paris to present research at the Pasteur Institute, a trek through the Peruvian Andes, and study abroad in China, England, Italy and Spain.

The 2008 College Scholarship recipients are:

Modupe Adepoju

Resides: Laurel, Maryland

Four-Year College or University: Duke University

Neilay Amin

Resides: Hatboro, Pennsylvania

Four-Year College or University: Swarthmore College

Etaba Assigana

Resides: Washington, DC

Four-Year College or University: Georgia Institute of Technology

Sam Bevet

Resides: Monkton, Vermont

Four-Year College or University: University of Vermont

Corinna Elise Bockstruck

Resides: Cheney, Washington

Four-Year College or University: Westmont College

Moeun Cha

Resides: Flushing, New York

Four-Year College or University: Harvard University

Kseniya Charova

Resides: Rockville, Maryland

Four-Year College or University: Stanford University

Mary Ellen Dingley

Resides: Woodstock, Georgia

Four-Year College or University: University of Mary Washington

Veda Eswarappa

Resides: Andover, Massachusetts

Four-Year College or University: Harvard University

Khadeejah Anne Gray

Resides: Harlem, New York

Four-Year College or University: Columbia University – Barnard College

Adam Alexander Hamilton

Resides: Detroit, Michigan

Four-Year College or University: University of Pennsylvania

Patrick Kennen Hunter

Resides: St. Louis, Missouri

Four-Year College or University: Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Raphael Johnson

Resides: Jacksonville, Florida

Four-Year College or University: University of Florida

Brenda Lin

Resides: San Diego, California

Four-Year College or University: Harvard University

Nathaniel Armstead Marshall

Resides: Chicago, Illinois

Four-Year College or University: Vanderbilt University

David Miller

Resides: Cranston, Rhode Island

Four-Year College or University: George Washington University

Kirill Miniaev

Resides: Overland Park, Kansas

Four-Year College or University: Yale University

Jesyka Palmer

Resides: Palmyra, Michigan

Four-Year College or University: Wellesley College

Elizabeth Ashley Roberts

Resides: Tucson, Arizona

Four-Year College or University: Yale University

Ronnye Rutledge

Resides: Fort Wayne, Indiana

Four-Year College or University: Harvard University

Richard Shin

Resides: Fairfax, Virginia

Four-Year College or University: University of Virginia

Jasmine Stanton

Resides: Washington, DC

Four-Year College or University: Florida A&M University

Eleine (Meng Ling) Sun

Resides: Morganton, North Carolina

Four-Year College or University: Carnegie Mellon University

William Tarpeh

Resides: Alexandria, Virginia

Four-Year College or University: Stanford University

Murphy Temple

Resides: Florence, Mississippi

Four-Year College or University: Yale University

Akito Terasaki

Resides: Newark, Delaware

Four-Year College or University: Columbia University

Lisa Michelle Vavricka

Resides: Pasadena, Texas

Four-Year College or University: University of Notre Dame

Alex Yuly

Resides: Seattle, Washington

Four-Year College or University: Brown University

*Complete biographies of the 2008 College Scholars are available at
www.jackkentcookefoundation.org.*

About the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is a private, independent foundation dedicated to helping young people of exceptional promise reach their full potential through education.

Established in 2000 by the estate of self-made billionaire Jack Kent Cooke, the Foundation focuses on high-achieving lower-income students from middle school through graduate school. Headquartered in northern Virginia, the Foundation has helped thousands of students nationally since opening its doors through individualized direct service programs, generous scholarships, and grants to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions.

With an endowment of \$700 million, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation is one of the 100 largest private foundations in the US. For more information please visit

www.jackkentcookefoundation.org.

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