

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## East Side Voices Project Awarded Grant

San Jose, California – January, 12, 2009 – San Jose State University The Center for Literary Arts in collaboration with, the MFA Program in Creative Writing, was awarded a grant from the Community Foundation Silicon Valley to begin the first phase of its East Side Voices Project, a literary outreach project between SJSU and Mt. Pleasant High School.

According to Alan Soldofsky, who directs the MFA Program and is the project coordinator for East Side Voices, “The East Side Voices Project will document the lives of the people from the historic east side of San Jose, giving these underrepresented subjects a voice in contemporary literature. The aim of this project is to facilitate inter-cultural dialogue and greater cultural understanding between ethnic groups in San Jose.” The project’s writer-in-residence, Samantha Lê, will mentor a group of 10 – 15 high school students in the creation and performance of monologue poems and short prose based on the lives of those who live and/or work in the east side of San Jose.

According to Samantha Lê, “The primary goals for this project are: to promote the production of literary work on a relevant and significant social topic, to provide east side high school students with the opportunity to learn from local writers and to express their cultural identity through writing, and to utilize literature as a vehicle to trade stories in a multi-ethnic arena.”

Samantha Lê, the writer-in-residence, is currently working on her MFA at SJSU. Lê’s publications include: *My Solitude*, a collection of poetry; *Corridors*, a collection of poetry and short stories; and *Little Sister Left Behind*, a fictional memoir, currently used as text book at the University of California Berkeley, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University and De Anza College.

For additional information or for samples of work written by participants in the East Side Voices Project, contact Alan Soldofsky.

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<http://www.sjsu.edu/cwmfa/index.html>

<http://www.litart.org/>

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