UC SANTA BARBARA

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Eileen Conrad

Children's Center Receives $2 Million Gift from the Orfaleas

Paul and Natalie Orfalea believe that quality child care is vital to the development of young children and the success of their parents.

"We strongly feel that working parents and students should know their children are properly taken care of in the best environment possible," said Paul Orfalea, founder of Kinko's, an international chain of more than 1,100 stores which he started 30 years ago in Isla Vista, the community adjacent to UC Santa Barbara.

As part of the couple's ongoing commitment to early childhood education and to UCSB, the Orfalea family has made a $2 million gift to the University Children's Center. Among the campuses of the University of California, the center is considered a model facility.

In recognition of their generosity, the center will be named the Orfalea Family Children's Center at UCSB in memory of Al and Virginia Orfalea, Paul's late parents, UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang has announced.

"We are proud to have the Orfalea family name permanently associated with UCSB in such a meaningful way," Yang said. "This is a marvelous and deeply appreciated gift to the dedicated members of our campus community. Like Paul and Natalie, we attach great importance to the value of quality child care."

The endowment will provide a permanent source of income that will enable the center to limit tuition, provide additional scholarships for low-income parents, and offer more parenting classes. (An endowment consists of money that is invested in order to provide interest income in perpetuity.)

"Our passion is to support child development centers and early childhood education," said Paul Orfalea. "By offering the highest quality early care available, students, faculty, and staff can confidently focus on their work and studies."

Mary Ray, director of the center, said, "This generous donation will ensure that UCSB will provide a quality early care and education program for many years to come. The Orfaleas have a unique grasp of the importance of quality child care and its impact on students, staff and faculty parents who are completing their degrees or employed at UCSB."

Growing up, Paul Orfalea faced many learning challenges. Through it all, he always had the strong support of his parents. "This gift is really a personal recognition that we are proud to be able to do," he said. "While everyone else around me made me feel incompetent, my parents offered continual encouragement."

The Orfalea Family Children's Center at UCSB is the largest employer-sponsored care provider in Santa Barbara County for children between the ages of three months and seven years. The center is committed to providing the highest quality early care and education with strong family support. Currently, 200 children are enrolled, and there is a wait list for admission.

Paul and Natalie Orfalea have been volunteer leaders and generous benefactors of the university for many years. With this gift, they join the Lancaster Society, UCSB's premier giving society which honors benefactors of $100,000 or more to the university.

Orfalea, a trustee of The UCSB Foundation, said his family made the gift "as UCSB has long been close to our hearts; it is the campus where the first Kinko's began and, of course, living here we are extremely dedicated to the local Santa Barbara community."

About the Donors:

Paul and Natalie Orfalea are partners in their philanthropic support for public education and early childhood care centers at colleges and universities.

Paul is a successful businessman and entrepreneur. The son of Lebanese immigrants, he founded Kinko's (a nickname derived from his trademark curly hair) in Isla Vista in 1970, selling school supplies and photocopies to college students. Today, Kinko's is the leading provider of electronic communications and document production services with 1,100 locations throughout the world. Kinko's is a corporate leader in providing on-site child care for its employees at its headquarters in Ventura. Earlier this year, Orfalea retired as chairperson of the board in order to devote more time to new business opportunities.

An alumnus of the University of Southern California, he was named Entrepreneur of the Year by USC's Marshall School of Business in 1998. Recently, he was honored as Philanthropist of the Year by the Network of California Community Colleges.

Natalie Orfalea is a former chair of the Chancellor's Council, UCSB's premier annual giving program. Following a successful career at Xerox Corporation, she ran an independent marketing firm. Currently, she plays leadership roles in numerous community organizations.

Paul Orfalea has been a trustee of The UCSB Foundation since 1987. In recognition of his dedication to the university, he was named an Honorary Alumnus of UCSB in 1998.

The Orfaleas have two children and live in Montecito.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.