

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Couple Honored with Education Award

*The owners of Newark based, **We CARE! Coffee Company**, are recognized for taking a unique idea and fresh-roasted coffee, and using it to help California School Music Programs.*

Newark, CA - March 4, 2010 - A Newark couple, owners of We CARE! Coffee Company, have something in common with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger – and it's not bulging biceps or rippling quads. All are recipients of the "*Don Schmeer – Friend of Music Education Award*". This award is given out annually by the **California Band Director's Association (CBDA)** to individuals making a difference in California through their support of Music Education.

Monika and Dave Strand started We CARE! Coffee Company back in 2000. Their idea was to create coffee-based fundraising programs, and then provide them to school groups and nonprofits, as an alternative to traditional fundraising products. "Coffee is a staple. People will buy it no matter what the economy is like - fundraiser or not. We thought it would be a good alternative to candy, cookie dough and gift wrap." Monika said recently. Because they roast the coffee themselves, they can offer a 50% profit to their clients.

While they work with all kinds of groups (schools, sports leagues and nonprofits), approximately 90% of their business is with school music programs. Dave has played trombone since 5th grade, and continues to perform with the Newark Symphonic Winds, while Monika is a former ballerina who now enjoys singing in the The Ohlone Chorale located in Fremont.

"Our company started concentrating on music education about 7 years ago. The Arts are usually the first thing cut when school districts are short on funds. It used to be that schools raised money for the extras. Many of the programs we work with now survive through fundraising." Says Dave.

According to Monika, "People forget just how important music is in their daily lives." "The Performing Arts give students the ability to express themselves. In addition, they get opportunities to do things they never would, otherwise." Last year, she had the opportunity to travel with her group to New York City, where she performed onstage with her daughter Alyssa, at Carnegie Hall.

When asked about the current state of music education in California, her husband Dave goes on to say "Band offers the rare chance for kids to learn to work together in a group while they master a really difficult and technical skill. It

takes dedication, focus and hard work. Plus it's fun. How can we not support that?"

The debt they owe to the school arts programs is hard to calculate. They count many school music directors and local musicians as close friends, and in addition, if it hadn't been for their high school's Performing Arts Department (Sequoia High School in Redwood City, CA), the two of them may never have met.

2010 is a particularly significant year for this couple, as it marks their company's 10th year in business. In addition, they will celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary. When asked about possible celebration plans Monika said, "I think we're going to enjoy a concert".

About We CARE! Coffee Company

Founded in 2000, We CARE! Coffee Company provides innovative fundraising solutions to schools, sports programs and nonprofits throughout the U.S. It is located in Newark, CA. For more information, call (866) 554-1225 or visit their website; www.wecarecoffee.com.