



## **Partners in Education Hires First Executive Director**

### **New Director to help build professional organization**

June 5, 2006 – Palo Alto, California – Palo Alto Partners in Education today announced the hiring of its first Executive Director – Ms. Muneerah Merchant, a Palo Alto resident with exceptional management skills, knowledge of the education sector in California, and experience organizing community volunteers.

Partners in Education is a non-profit foundation focused on raising funds to augment the Palo Alto Unified School District Budget. The foundation was formed in August 2005 from the merger of two existing education foundations. One of its key goals for its first year of operation was to hire a full-time Executive Director.

Susan Bailey, board president of Partners in Education, commented, “We looked for a dynamic, self-starting leader with strong people management, organizational, fundraising, communication, self-starting, and consensus-building skills. We believe that Muneerah has the background and passion to take our organization to new heights.”

As Executive Director, Ms. Merchant will provide overall leadership and direction for visioning, strategic planning, volunteer management, development and fundraising. Her fundamental goal is to develop a lasting continuum of contribution and support from all segments of the community to help Partners in Education enhance the educational experience offered by PAUSD. Ms. Merchant will work out of the foundation’s office at 25 Churchill. She begins work on June 15, 2006.

Ms. Merchant has fifteen years of experience working as a management consultant, most recently as Senior Principal at the San Francisco offices of the Parthenon Group, a boutique strategic advisory firm. At Parthenon, her areas of expertise were global corporate restructuring, merger integration and growth strategy development. While at the Parthenon Group, she developed a long-term growth strategy and business plan for a leading Sacramento-based non-profit focused on reforming high schools and promoting youth development.

Ms. Merchant also has been active in community groups and other non-profit organizations. From 1999 – 2005 she was a key member of a 25 member volunteer board for the

Aga Khan Shia Imami Council for the USA. The board oversees health, education, economic planning and other community development related initiatives for Ismaili Muslims in the USA. She is currently a lead member of a committee recruiting U.S. professionals for international careers with the Aga Khan Development Network in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Ms. Merchant has an undergraduate degree from Smith College, a master's degree in business administration from Harvard, and a master's degree in science from Northwestern University. She is married and has one young child. A photograph is available upon request.

### **Partners in Education**

Palo Alto Partners in Education is a nonprofit 501(c)3 foundation dedicated to sustaining extraordinary public education in Palo Alto. In March, the foundation donated \$1.89 million to the Palo Alto Unified School District to augment its 2006-07 budget. For more information, please visit [www.papie.org](http://www.papie.org).

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