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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**RAYMOND BUTLER* – THE FIRST GRADUATE
OF ETTIE LEE’S PARTNERSHIP WITH
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING POMONA STUDY CENTER**

June 8, 2009 – Ettie Lee Youth & Family Services is proud to announce that Raymond Butler is the first to graduate from Ettie Lee Youth & Family Services Study Center operated by Opportunities for Learning Public Charter School (OFL) in Pomona. Raymond Butler was referred to Ettie Lee by the Los Angeles Probation Department in November 2008. He was an angry young man without any goals. Today, Raymond graduates high school and begins his college career. His goal is to earn degree in Psychology by starting at a community college before transferring to a 4-year university.

In 2007 Ettie Lee partnered with OFL due to their structured, yet flexible high school classes for at risk youth. For many years Ettie Lee’s young men attended school in the local neighborhoods where Ettie Lee group homes are located. They were severely behind academically due to their erratic attendance and poor school performance records and they desperately need an opportunity to overcome their deficits. “Unfortunately most of the young men in our group homes are far below grade level than their peers in the neighborhood schools and as you might imagine they did not fare well in these schools,” stated Clayton Downey, president and CEO of Ettie Lee Youth & Family Services. Downey continued by stating, “By partnering with OFL the young men are able to start exactly at the academic level that is appropriate for them and they are more likely to be successful in obtaining their degree.”

Continues Downey, “and, since partnering with OFL in 2007, we have been able to assure that the young men enrolled attend school every day, pay attention in class and complete all of their homework. The results have been amazing. Some of the young men have increased their standardized test scores by as much as two full grade levels in just the last six months; all report that they are enjoying school more than they ever did before and some are now seeing a college education as a real possibility for themselves.”

Ettie Lee’s group home focus is on serving older boys than other child welfare agencies, most of whom are on probation. These are very troubled children with severe and complex problems due to their chaotic histories of trying to live with their own dysfunctional families.

An advantage of our group homes is they provide structured, family-style residential living. All are located in residential and semi-residential areas. Emphasizing a homelike atmosphere lets our boys experience what home living should be, minimizes the stigma of residential care and makes them feel as much as possible similar to their peers who live with their own families, but it creates enormous transportation problems.

For the past 59 years Ettie Lee Youth & Family has served at-risk youth. Last year Ettie Lee served 355 unduplicated boys and girls and their families: 62% were Hispanic, 24% African-American, 11.4% Caucasian, 1.4% Asian/Pacific Islander; .3% American Indian; .9% other and over 97% were from low-income and/or disadvantaged families. Ettie Lee operates nine group homes in Southern California and a Foster Family / Adoption Agency.

Ettie Lee Youth & Family Services is a nonprofit child welfare agency serving the complex needs of at-risk youth who have been abused, neglected or abandoned. Its mission is to assist troubled youth who are in need of guidance and support to develop values and skills that will facilitate their success in life. Ettie Lee complies with the highest standards of Community Care Licensing, Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services, and Los Angeles County Department of Probation. Ettie Lee is accredited by the California Alliance for Children & Families and the Council on Accreditation.

Since its inception in 1998 Opportunities for Learning has grown to operate 37 individual campuses under the umbrella of three charters. The founders John and Joan Hall are pioneers who formerly worked in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Over the last 15 years, they have helped thousands of students realize their educational goals.

*Due to confidentiality issues we are not able to use the student's real name.