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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Villa Esperanza Services Awarded Grant from City of Calabasas**

***Grant from City of Calabasas Assists Developmentally Disabled with Work Program***

**Calabasas, CALIF – Thursday, July 27, 2006** –The City of Calabasas has awarded Villa Esperanza Services Vocational Program with a \$4,000 grant to benefit adults with developmental disabilities who are seeking employment.

Villa Esperanza Services West Region Vocational program provides a landscape maintenance training program for developmentally disabled, yet physically capable, adults 18 and older. The program provides full-time employment in basic ground maintenance and ongoing vocational education specific to the field. Through the vocational training partnership with the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD), Villa has one crew of four developmentally disabled adults full-time, on-site providing landscape services to the agency's facilities (Calabasas headquarters, Rancho Treatment plant, Tapia Facility, and the reservoir in Westlake). "Our experience with Villa has been very positive," shares John Mundy, General Manager of the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District. Mundy adds, "The crew members are courteous, conscientious and well supervised. Each week, we see the added benefits of meaningful work and vocational training for their workforce... The crews go to great lengths to be sure we are satisfied."

Thanks to the generosity of the City of Calabasas, Villa can now purchase new landscape equipment for the work program. Robert Efford, Director of Villa's Vocational Program explains "The landscape maintenance program is a growing enterprise and in order to remain competitive with other landscaping businesses we need to have appropriate and efficient equipment for our landscape crews. By providing quality services we will be able to obtain more contracts and will be able to expand the program to provide more job placements for adults with developmental disabilities in Calabasas."

The grant also provides funding for marketing and outreach to local residents in Calabasas who have a developmental disability and are seeking vocational training and job placement. Through this program adults have the opportunity to learn new skills, responsibility, and earn a paycheck.

Villa Esperanza Services is in its 45<sup>th</sup> year serving people with developmental disabilities. Villa was founded in 1961 by a group of mothers who believed their developmentally disabled children deserved quality care and education. Today, Villa provides a range of programs that serve a diverse disabled population of over 1050 individuals in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, including children, and adults with special needs associated with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities, and vulnerable at-risk adults and seniors.

For more information on the partnership with the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District or on Villa Esperanza Services please call (626) 449-2919, Ext. 62. [www.villaesperanzaservices.org](http://www.villaesperanzaservices.org)