



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Community Gatepath inspires as it proves the Power of Possibilities**

**October 15, 2008** - He's appeared on TV shows from "Oprah" to "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," but when Patrick Henry Hughes finished speaking at Community Gatepath's The Power of Possibilities recognition breakfast on Friday, October 10 there was not a dry eye in the house.

Gatepath's breakfast has a reputation for being one of San Mateo County's most memorable events and this year was no exception thanks to Hughes, who inspired guests with his positive energy and musical talent. Hughes was born without eyes or the ability to fully extend his arms and legs. In the face of what many would call disabilities, Hughes has become an accomplished pianist and singer. He entertained the crowd of nearly 500 people with renditions of popular tunes such as, "What a Wonderful World." In addition to playing piano, Hughes plays trumpet for the University of Louisville marching band with the help of his father who proudly maneuvers his wheelchair through the band's formations.

Hughes' story is remarkable, but not unusual. At the breakfast, Gatepath celebrated Jenna Yee, one of the nonprofit's participants who has shown remarkable growth in the past year. From the time she joined Gatepath a few short years ago, Jenna showed tremendous promise and graduated from the nonprofit's Transition Services for Young Adults to a group employment site at a peninsula Walgreens. She is now looking forward to an individual job placement, and her employment at Walgreens, which she greatly enjoys, has brought Yee closer than ever before to her ultimate goal of independent living. Yee accepted the award in person and, as she thanked her parents and Gatepath for helping her achieve her goals, her eyes welled with genuine tears of joy.

Other honorees included the law firm Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, which was named business partner of the year and Yee's employer, Walgreens, who became the first recipient of the Sheryl Young Community Impact Award. The new award was named for Community Gatepath's CEO who recently celebrated her 20th year with the nonprofit. Young's long-time friend Congresswoman Jackie Speier helped present the award, which was a complete surprise to Young. "At Gatepath," Young said, "we truly value our community partners who lead the way and tap into the talents of a segment of the population that struggles to find work; this morning is really about those partners and the successes of our participants."

Many guests expressed their surprise at being so inspired by Hughes and Yee at a business breakfast event. "I am thrilled that everyone at the breakfast could see first hand how people with disabilities prove the power of possibilities every day as they work to achieve their dreams," said Young.

After the breakfast, Hughes signed early release copies of his book, entitled "I Am Potential," which will hit store shelves at the end of October. Hughes remained after the breakfast and book signing to speak to an intimate crowd of Gatepath participants who were thrilled to meet him and hear his story of success. Hughes played several songs from his CD, and even took requests, as well as shared a few of the insights his life has brought him. "P.A.T.," he told the participants in his warm southern drawl, "they aren't just the first three letters of my name. They stand for passion, patience, perseverance; ability, attitude; trust." Sticking to those six words has gotten Hughes and his family from devastation at first learning of his disabilities to rejoicing in the person made by them - a person who is not limited by what he can't do but who values all he can do.

Sponsors of the Power of Possibilities include powerful leaders Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy; Double Forte; Pacific Gas and Electric Company; Peninsula Health Care District; SummerHill Homes; and powerful partners Borel Private Bank & Trust Company; Carr, McClellan, Ingersoll, Thompson & Horn; Congresswoman Jackie Speier; Correy, Luzaich, Pliska, de Ghetalkdi & Nastari, LLP; Guckenheimer; Mills-Peninsula Health Services; The Daily Journal (in-kind sponsor); Webcor Builders; Wells Fargo; Murray and Howard; Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy.

With roots in our community for nearly 90 years, Community Gatepath is the largest nonprofit serving people with disabilities in San Mateo County dedicated to building

inclusive environments where individuals of all abilities can thrive. Gatepath reaches people with developmental disabilities and their families throughout the Bay Area through Early Intervention Services, Learning Links Preschool, Family Resource Center, Transition Services for Young Adults, Employment Placement and Training, Adult and Senior Day Services, and PigMillion Possibilities. For more information, visit [www.gatepath.com](http://www.gatepath.com).

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