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**Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard Hosted Congressional Colleagues
Xavier Becerra, Laura Richardson, Maxine Waters and Diane Watson at
Inner-City Arts for Reception and Dialogue on
Arts Education, the Cultural Economy and Civic Engagement**

(October 20, 2010) Downtown, Los Angeles – **Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)** welcomed Congressman **Xavier Becerra (CA-31)** and **Congresswomen Laura Richardson (CA-37), Maxine Waters (CA-35)** and **Diane Watson (CA-33)** to Inner-City Arts for a dialogue on arts education, the cultural economy and civic engagement. Inner-City Arts is a non-profit arts education center on Los Angeles’ Skid Row.

Los Angeles Councilwoman Jan Perry, 9th District, and Martha Saucedo of AEG/Staples Center, and Jeff Valdez, co-chairman of Maya Entertainment, joined the conversation, which also included nearly 100 civic and business leaders from the Los Angeles community. Dancers from Inner-City Arts High School Performing Arts Institute performed their original work through dances that focus on social issues, including stereotypes, economics, language and societal expectations.

Congresswoman Roybal-Allard’s 34th Congressional District includes Downtown Los Angeles where the Inner-City Arts campus is located. Inner-City Arts serves 24 elementary and middle schools in Congresswoman Roybal-Allard’s District, which includes the children of the nearly 30,000 homeless families that live in and around Downtown’s Skid Row. The one-acre Inner-City Arts campus houses nine art studios where professional working artists lead the students in hands-on activities designed to foster creative expression.

“As a proud advocate of Inner-City Arts, I sincerely thank everyone who works to make this organization the tremendous gift that it is for the children of our communities,” Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard said. “I thank its founders, Bob Bates and Irwin Jaeger, for their vision, the Board of Directors, the many passionate supporters of the organization, and the staff, instructors, parents and volunteers who provide the quality instruction, inspiration and manpower needed to ensure a healthy and positive learning experience for the art center’s participants. Inner-City Arts has become much more than a safe haven for our underserved children. By using the arts to enhance the students’ education and awaken their creativity and self-esteem, Inner-City Arts is helping a new generation of children overcome the poverty and adversity into which many were born.”

Cynthia Harnisch, president and CEO of Inner-City Arts, reminded the crowd that the arts are vital for children, especially those living at or below the poverty line, to be successful in school and in life. “The arts should never be just an elective in our schools or in our own lives. They are a necessity, our human birthright, our patrimony. Inner-City Arts is the embodiment of what’s

possible, what we are trying to achieve at a national and international level, by creating opportunities for at-risk children to participate in the arts and to achieve beyond their wildest dreams.

“The U.S. Department of Education concluded, after studying 3,000 Inner-City Arts students over five years, that their standardized test scores increased by 25% in math, 18% in reading and 8% in language arts. Over 15 years all Inner-City Arts animation students have graduated from high school and most have gone on to higher education. That is a staggering success rate, particularly in this neighborhood, which has been called the epicenter of the homeless capital of the world, and where fewer than 50% of students graduate high school. Inner-City Arts students clearly exemplify the power of an arts education,” Cynthia Harnisch continued.

“We can’t thank Congresswoman Roybal-Allard enough for inviting her colleagues to take part in this conversation. We know all of them are avid champions of the arts and we want to express our continued gratitude for your support and advocacy on behalf of arts education,” Ms. Harnisch said.

About Inner-City Arts: Inner-City Arts is a learning oasis in the heart of Skid Row where professional artists teach students in a real studio environment. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, Inner-City Arts works in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District to bring elementary and middle school students to its campus during the school day for instruction in the visual and performing arts. High school students participate in after-school and Saturday programs. Inner-City Arts serves up to 16,000 of the city’s most at-risk students each year at no cost to the students. For more information visit www.inner-cityarts.org.

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