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New Americans Museum Opens in San Diego at NTC Promenade, Liberty Station

Features Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition as First Show

Public Invited to Open House, Saturday, June 21, 11- 4pm
Free Parking and Entertainment

June 4, 2008--San Diego, California- **The New Americans Museum**, a new museum and learning center celebrating the lives and contributions of the nation's diverse immigrant population will open its doors to the public on **June 21** with multicultural, multi-media activities at NTC Promenade at Liberty Station.

"Our mission is to be a catalyst to celebrate America's past and promise. We aim to foster public awareness of the values and strengths that immigrants bring to our commonwealth—their new energy, their values, their hard work," said Deborah Szekely, museum Founder.

On Saturday, June 21, from 11am - 4pm, the museum will welcome the community with an open house featuring a free day of exhibitions, refreshments and entertainment from around the world.

Opening exhibitions include the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service's "**Becoming American: Teenagers & Immigration**," featuring the photographs of Barbara Beirne. The Open House will also feature a presentation by Beirne at **1:30**. Support for this exhibition is provided by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors at the recommendation of Supervisors Greg Cox, Pam Slater-Price and Ron Roberts.

The New Americans Museum Exhibition Gallery will also feature "**A Contemporary Story: Perspectives by Immigrant and Refugee Artists**," a collaboration between the New Americans Museum and The AJA Project, a San Diego

non-profit founded to empower refugee youth to use photography and other media arts to share their stories. Major funding for both these exhibitions was provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture.

Established as a 501(c)(3), the museum took seven years of careful planning, said Executive Director Gayle Hom, herself a third generation Chinese American and native San Diegan.

“The focus will be the immigrant experience. Our museum strives to be a part of a global movement to share the stories of migration. Similar museums are being established in other countries i.e. France, Australia, Brazil, and elsewhere. We hope to share stories of migration from every hemisphere,” explained Hom.

The 4,000-square-foot museum will also serve as a public forum venue and will partner with other organizations on oral and visual history projects, visual and performing arts programming, cultural events, lectures and speaker series, films, conferences and exhibitions.

“You will discover a museum that is not a collection of artifacts,” said Deborah Szekely, “but rather a gathering of living ideas and ideals...the stories of brave individuals who left their homelands to create their future in a land of peace and opportunity. Their memories of courageous and often dangerous journeys begin—each one—with their indomitable will to take charge of their lives and their future. These are the people who are worthy of being honored by all future generations, for they are the best of the best of their villages, towns and cities. They were the ones who, unwilling to accept status quo, would rather confront the unknown, drawn forward by the shining beacon of freedom—the United States of America. “

Residents, visitors, scholars and school groups will find the museum an invaluable gateway to understanding the immigration experience. For more information about the New Americans Museum and its Opening Activities, please visit

www.newamericansmuseum.org

CALENDAR LISTING: New Americans Museum

NTC Promenade, Liberty Station, 2825 Dewey Road, Suite 102, San Diego 92106; 619-255-8908, Hours 11am-5 pm, Wednesday-Sunday. No charge for admission. This new museum (opening June 21, 2008) celebrates the contributions of America's diverse immigrant population. Opening exhibitions: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service's "**Becoming American: Teenagers & Immigration, Photographs by Barbara Beirne**" features black-and-white photo "interviews" by Beirne, who traveled through San Diego and the United States capturing teenagers' responses to the immigrant experience; and "**A Contemporary Story: Perspectives by Immigrant and Refugee Artists**," a collaboration between the New Americans Museum and The AJA Project, a San Diego non-profit founded to empower refugee youth to use photography and other media arts to share their stories.

www.newamericansmuseum.org