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**Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA) Awarded Grants
for End-of-Life (EOL) Programs
Involving Cultural Knowledge & EOL Literacy**

The David and Laura Lovell Foundation and the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona have awarded grants to fund the SFA Continuum Program

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Tucson, AZ—The Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA) has received \$100,000 in grants to continue its work with the Continuum Program, which involves cultural conversations, documentation and education in support of Southern Arizona’s folk, ethnic, occupational, faith-based and alternative communities involved in grief and end-of-life issues.

The grants were awarded to SFA last month by the Shaaron Kent Endowment Fund held at the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona and the David and Laura Lovell Foundation. Money will go to cooperatively address issues related to the awareness, understanding, and availability of end-of-life care, particularly for underserved and vulnerable communities. Over the past four years, SFA has worked with other local organizations as part of an innovative, countywide collaboration. With CFSA and Lovell Foundation funding that collaboration will now be one of the largest end-of-life care initiatives in the nation.

SFA will use its award to bring end-of-life conversations alive in various Southern Arizona folk or ethnic communities throughout Pima County. The Continuum Program will facilitate community gatherings, including locally hosted and sourced meals in community locations; and documentation and education of locally relevant rituals, elder storytelling, and ethnic traditions. Online and printed media will supplement the in-community gatherings, all intended to honor tradition, share knowledge, promote awareness and ease transitions in end-of-life decisions.

“Families, caregivers and community organizations will learn from fresh perspectives of cross-cultural experience,” says Dr. Maribel Alvarez, University of Arizona professor and Executive Director of SFA. “The Continuum Program continues to be a platform to inform and engage community in cultural ways we believe will improve understanding of issues, and, ultimately, the care of those near end of life, or grieving.”

SFA’s Continuum Program to share cultural knowledge associated with end of life, grief, mourning, and death began in 2014. That year, the project engaged in ethnographic fieldwork to map and document local traditions associated with death and dying. The fieldwork was later published in the Continuum Journal. An April 2015 forum shared the research efforts and included nationally prominent educators and community advocates. An information table of field findings and material culture appeared as part of the 2015 TMY festival. In 2016, four additional meetings addressing end of life and cultural implications were held, with four additional ethnographic documents produced. A web component sustains the program online, allowing

ongoing community access to the information.

“As culture rises as a critical health care competency, so does the essential need for understanding and accepting the traditions, practices or materials that support life and death transition in our multi-cultural, ethnic and alternative communities,” says Dr. Alvarez. “The Southwest Folklife Alliance, with renewed support from the Shaaron Kent Endowment Fund held at the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona and the Lovell Foundation, has kept a cultural lens on aspects of grief, dying, death and ancestral honor. SFA intends to remain at the table to help our communities and our health/social service practitioners remain aware of culture as a threshold component of clinical practice as well as quality of life.”

For resources and to learn more about the Continuum Program: www.southwestfolklife.org.

About Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA)

The multidisciplinary non-profit was organized in 2014, when the largest annual regional folklife festival, Tucson Meet Yourself, serving more than 120,000 people annually in Southern Arizona since 1974, was transformed into the year-round regional Southwest Folklife Alliance. SFA now offers heritage-arts research and education, artist assistance, and master-apprenticeship fellowships. It also hosts exhibits, media, workshops, and other outreach or training that advances understanding of the role of traditional culture in communities across the Southwest. Learn more at: www.southwestfolklife.org

About the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona

The Community Foundation for Southern Arizona provides expertise and skilled guidance to help donors give back in ways that are aligned with their charitable and financial goals. Donors establish charitable funds that join hundreds of other funds under one organizational roof and every year, portions of each fund are used to make grants, scholarships, and awards in accordance with each donor’s intentions. The Board of Trustees oversees the Foundation’s growing community endowment and ensures that donors’ intentions are honored now and forever. For more information, visit www.cfsaz.org.

About the David and Laura Lovell Foundation

Over the past 23 years, the Lovell Foundation awarded more than \$14 million in grants to nonprofits for specific projects. For more information, visit www.lovellfoundation.org or call (520) 325-3656.