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WOMEN'S INITIATIVE HONORS THREE BAY AREA BUSINESS LEADERS ON MAY 13

Janet Lamkin, Bank of America, receives Founders Award

Alison Barakat, Bakesale Betty, receives Enterprising Woman of the Year Award

Josey White, The Front Porch restaurant, receives Enterprising Woman on the Rise Award

San Francisco, CA – Women's Initiative, a Bay Area non-profit providing training and support to empower low-income women to start and grow their own businesses, will honor three Bay Area business leaders, including two Women's Initiative graduates, at the organization's annual Award Celebration on May 13 at the Westin St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco.

Janet Lamkin, president of Bank of America California, will receive the Founders' Award. As president of Bank of America California, Janet has been a tireless advocate for young professional women, whether by mentoring them as they build careers within the company or by supporting community organizations such as Women's Initiative. She is a passionate advocate for the bank's commitment to serving low- and moderate-income communities and for the idea that creating opportunities in these communities increases the bank's long-term financial prospects. Past Founders' Award honorees include Carrie Schwab Pomerantz of Charles Schwab & Co. and Lisa Stevens of Wells Fargo.

Alison Barakat, owner of Bakesale Betty in Oakland, will receive the Enterprising Woman of the Year award. A 2003 graduate of Women's Initiative's Simple Steps program, Alison has grown her business from selling baked goods at farmers markets to opening a storefront in Oakland's Temescal district. Today, Alison employs more than 80 people and is set to open her second location in downtown Oakland. Her cookies are regularly delivered to the Governor's Mansion in Sacramento, and customers line up down the street to get her famous chicken sandwich, which has been featured in numerous Bay Area publications.

Josey White, owner of The Front Porch restaurant in San Francisco will receive the Enterprising Woman of the Year award. With experience in all aspects of the restaurant industry Josey graduated from the Women's Initiative program in 2006 with dreams of opening her own restaurant. Three years later, The Front Porch is one of the Mission's most popular restaurants.

"The theme of our celebration this year is 'Women of Action' and Janet, Alison and Josey all represent the spirit of that theme," said Julie Castro Abrams, CEO of Women's Initiative. "Janet is an amazing mentor, role model and community leader and we're honored to have her involved with Women's Initiative. By launching successful businesses, creating jobs and putting money back in the local economy, Jose and Alison are taking action to support their communities."

For more information about Women's Initiative and the May 13th Award celebration, go to www.womensinitiative.org.

ABOUT WOMEN'S INITIATIVE:

Women's Initiative for Self Employment in a Bay Area non-profit providing high-potential, lower-income women with the training, financing and support to start and grow their own businesses. The organization focuses on women because women are often those in the lowest-paid sectors of our economy. And it is women who, with the start of a successful business, spend more of their increased income on their families and provide higher paying jobs and better economic development opportunities for their communities. For 20 years, Women's Initiative has provided uniquely tailored training, financing, technical assistance, and ongoing support services – in English and Spanish – to improve the quality of life for the women, their families and their communities. Visit us at www.WomensInitiative.org.

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