

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEW LEADERSHIP AT BAY AREA MICROENTERPRISE NONPROFIT**

*Women's Initiative for Self Employment Governing Board elects Alison Davis as Chair of Governing Board*

*Organization names Thais Rezende executive director, Alameda County and Nicole Levine executive director, San Francisco*

San Francisco, CA--Women's Initiative for Self Employment, one of the nation's largest microenterprise training and funding organizations, has announced that it's Governing Board elected Alison Davis as Chair of the Governing Board. Davis was recently the managing partner at Belvedere Capital Partners and serves on the board of directors of LECCG, Gamefly, Xoom, and several other private companies. Prior to Belvedere Capital, she was the chief financial officer and global management committee member for Barclays Global Investors. Previously, she spent seven years in various leadership roles with AT Kearney, the global management consulting firm, and nine years with McKinsey & Company in the London and New York offices. Davis holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and Stanford Graduate School of Business as well as a BA and an MA in economics from Cambridge University in England.

Davis replaces Michele Grau-Young as chair of the board. Young served as the chair of the board from 2007 through July, 2010. Currently Grau-Young is VP, Global Financial Planning and Analysis, PayPal, Inc.

Other officers elected to the board include Rita Steel as Vice Chair. Steel is the President of Robert Half for the Western U.S. and Canada. Lynn Sullivan of Union Bank serves on the Executive Committee as Chair of the nominations and development committee, Andrew Green of AT Kearney serves as Secretary and Chair of the strategic expansion committee, and Lynn Crawford as Chair of the finance committee.

In addition, Women's Initiative has appointed two new regional executive directors. Thais Rezende, formerly the executive director, San Francisco and the North Bay for Women's Initiative, has returned from maternity leave as executive director, Alameda County. Rezende oversees operations and development for the organization in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

Nicole Levine, who has been serving as an interim executive director will join the organization full time as executive director, San Francisco. In addition to her duties as executive director, Nicole will oversee the Women's Initiative Loan Fund which provides microloans to women who have completed the Women's Initiative training course.

The appointments reflect Women's Initiative's recent growth in the Bay Area. The organization now has offices and training facilities in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Concord and Novato, offers training at nine other locations throughout the Bay Area at

partner organization sites and expects to serve more than 3,000 women in 2010. Women's Initiative is currently looking to fill executive director positions in the North Bay and Contra Costa County.

An Oakland resident, Rezende has more than 10 years of management experience. Before becoming an executive director, she was a program director with Women's Initiative, overseeing both the training and SuccessLink program. Prior to Women's Initiative, Rezende was a program specialist for OLDCOA in Oakland and worked in her native Mexico as both a print and TV journalist, and for a community organization helping open three virtual libraries and consistently provided services to more than 300 homeless children.

Nicole Levine brings more than 20 years of experience in the Bay Area private and nonprofit sectors, with a special focus on economic development. She has a long history with Women's Initiative including serving as a volunteer, program assistant and business trainer at different times in her career. Her professional background includes serving as the interim executive director for Urban Solutions and the Oakland Ballet, and executive director for Wardrobe for Opportunity. She also spent four years providing microloans and business assistance at OBDC Small Business Finance. Leveraging her experience in the nonprofit sector, she has worked with HP, Agilent and Chevron to strengthen their community and grant making programs. Nicole earned an MBA from UC Davis and is honored to be on the advisory board of the Bay Area Women's and Children's Resource Center.

### **About Women's Initiative**

For more than 20 years, Women's Initiative has been providing low-income women throughout the Bay Area with the training, funding and ongoing support to start their own business and become economically self sufficient. In English and in Spanish, women conquer their fears of success, complete a business plan, learn technology, access capital, and meet influential and experienced business people who can help them succeed. The women who go through our program significantly increase their income and assets while launching businesses, creating jobs and stimulating the local economy. In 2009 alone, Women's Initiative graduates created 2,244 jobs in the Bay Area. .

**For photos of Alison Davis, Thais Rezende or Nicole Levine, please contact [esnook@womensinitiative.org](mailto:esnook@womensinitiative.org) or [aelizondo@womensinitiative.org](mailto:aelizondo@womensinitiative.org).**