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Contact:
Gwendolyn Mitchell/Marina Hinestrosa
Office of Public Affairs
(408) 299-5121

Melinda Cervantes/Nancy Howe
Santa Clara County Library
(408) 293-2326 Ext. 3001

Technological Upgrades Enhance Customer Service at Santa Clara County Library System
362 New Public Computers, Powerful Print Stations and Other Improvements Replace 5 Year Old Existing Computer System

SAN JOSE-CALIF.—Residents visiting any library of the Santa Clara County Library system now have access to over 360 brand new computers and powerful print stations. The systemwide improvements finalized at the end of September are part of a technological upgrade plan to enhance services currently available to patrons.

"All the improvements we regularly make in our system help clients succeed at school, at work or to provide a variety of resources they can use to improve their lives," said Melinda Cervantes, County Librarian. "Thanks to the virtual capabilities we have, our libraries never sleep. Residents can access resources and librarians that can help them online even when the library doors close for the day."

"Public libraries are fantastic places that support full participation in society and nurture knowledge, intellectual development and personal growth," said County Supervisor and Library Joint Powers of Authority member Liz Kniss, "These invaluable resources can help residents to conduct school research, learn new skills, enhance social and professional networking, and even find a job."

Santa Clara County Library reports that during fiscal year 2007-2008, 10 million items circulated in the library system. As databases are a growing area for Santa Clara County Library, the new computers are essential tools for library users, especially those who cannot afford a computer at home. Just this September, the library recorded over 110,000 searches for online research, which do not include searches in the library catalog.

"Technology changes very fast, and we have such a high volume of computer use, that our goal is to replace these public access computers every three to five years," said Nancy Howe, Santa Clara County Deputy County Librarian. "Now our patrons can enjoy simple and practical features such as saving documents to their portable USB devices."

As part of the technological upgrades, library patrons have access to the library catalog, electronic resources, databases and online tutoring services. Because anyone with a library card and a

computer at home can access them, free of charge, at any time of the day, or night, some services are becoming increasingly popular. *Brainfuse*, an online tutoring for children 3 to 12, is one of these services. Last month Santa Clara Library recorded 1,475 tutoring sessions of this service, currently available in English and Spanish. The online service that supports skill building and provides guidance to students attempting to resolve homework problems has been partially funded for the last two years through a grant from the State of California and the Santa Clara County Library system. Parents are also using online books for children who are learning to read.

About Santa Clara County Library

Santa Clara County Library includes the following libraries: Campbell Library, Cupertino Library, Gilroy Library, Los Altos Library, Milpitas Library, Morgan Hill Library, Saratoga Library and the Book Mobile. The system serves more than 412,000 residents of Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Saratoga and the unincorporated areas of the County.

A long term technology plan guides Santa Clara County's service enhancement process. All these technological improvements are possible thanks to actions taken by the Joint Powers Authority, JPA, the library's governing board. The Joint Powers Authority has been able to build a technology reserve fund so Santa Clara County Library is able to keep pace with current technology and make it available to the public in all libraries. The JPA Board includes one city council member from each of the nine participating cities and two Supervisors appointed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

The newly installed computer system includes:

• 362 brand new public computers and print stations. Equipment features 17 inch monitors, ability to listen to sound or watch a DVD. Residents need to bring their own headphones, and portable USB Drives to transport and save personal files and documents.
• Internet access, upgraded Microsoft word, excel and power point.
• Access to the library catalog, electronic resources, databases and online tutoring services.
• Access to live tutors through *Brainfuse* for students in grades 3-12.
• Installation of SAM by Comprise System, a new time management software that handles a waiting list for those times when all computers are in use. It provides an estimated wait time and assigns the computers on a first come, first serve basis.

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