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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For Immediate Release

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SPOOK HALL OPENS SOON AT SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER

Eldridge California, - Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) will begin their Halloween festivities on Monday, October 19, 2009, with the opening of the Eldridge Community Spook Hall located at the facility gymnasium.

Sonoma's Spook Hall began as a one-room sensory spook house in the 1970's. Today, it is a maze comprised of several themed "rooms" with interactive attractions.

Just after the close of the SDC Performing Arts Company production each year, under the leadership of Rehabilitation Therapist Paul Nieuwenhuijs, the stage and sets are torn down and the gymnasium is transformed into an interactive maze of adventure characteristic of a typical haunted house. In the past, sets from the annual play have been "resurrected" to create hauntingly familiar yet new scenes in sections of the Spook Hall.

This annual holiday attraction has become so popular that a variety of staff from several departments throughout the Center have asked to take part in the planning and decorating of the Spook Hall. In appreciation of the group effort, Nieuwenhuijs has renamed it the Eldridge Community Spook Hall and promises this year's version will not disappoint repeat visitors.

Because most scenes are activated by switches, motion, or sound, the Spook Hall is suitable for all ages. The Eldridge Community Spook Hall is wheelchair accessible and is open to the public. Entry is free. The operating schedule is: Monday through Thursday from 10 am to noon, 1 pm to 4 pm, and 6 pm to 8 pm; Fridays from 10 am to noon and 1pm to 4 pm; and Saturdays from 9 am to noon and 1 pm to 4pm through October 30th. The spook hall will close at 3pm on Halloween.

For directions to the gymnasium located on Wilson Road at Sonoma Developmental Center, go to http://www.dds.ca.gov/sonoma/sonoma_directions.cfm.

Sonoma Developmental Center, located in the heart of the wine country, is the largest facility in California established specifically for serving the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and is one of four developmental centers operated by the Department of Developmental Services. Services to these individuals are provided through contracts with twenty-one non-profit regional centers that are geographically situated with defined "catchment" areas. The Department also operates two state-operated community residential facilities.

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