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## **COACHELLA VALLEY HOUSING COALITION AWARDS FIRST-EVER FATHER EDWARD DONOVAN \$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP**

**Indio, CA (June 18, 2013)** – This year, Coachella Valley Housing Coalition’s (CVHC) Board of Directors announced the creation of the Father Edward Donovan Memorial Scholarship, a \$2,000 award given to one college-bound student along with the opportunity to undertake a paid summer internship with the CVHC. This new scholarship was created as an extension of the current John F. Mealey Scholarship Fund. Applicants for the scholarship must live in a farm worker family, demonstrate good leadership ability and a commitment to community service.

This scholarship was created to continue the legacy of Father Donovan and his commitment and enthusiasm for service. Ordained in 1959, Father Donovan worked in campus ministry and in 1978, was placed on special assignment in Los Angeles with the United Farm Workers of America where he ministered to Hispanic Catholics. It was there he became aware of the problems and needs of this community, most specifically the need for decent housing. As a result, he was instrumental in the creation of the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition.

This year’s first-ever Father Edward Donovan scholar is Gerardo Alva Chavez of Coachella. His family resides in a farm worker apartment community, Pueblo Nuevo, the first affordable housing apartment complex built by CVHC in 1986.

“We had many strong applicants for this scholarship, but really felt a connection to Gerardo,” said John F. Mealey, executive director of the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition. “We never could have imagined this scholarship would bring about so many young individuals following in Father Donovan’s path. Gerardo truly embodies the spirit of this award and we know he will continue to accomplish greatness.”

Chavez is currently attending California State University Stanislaus and holds a 3.96 GPA. The CVHC was impressed to learn that while working hard as a full-time student, Chavez continues to add to his more than 74 hours of community service. In addition, he serves as president of a campus organization called

the Hunger Network Club. The club has organized and executed numerous charitable relief projects such as Harvest for the Hungry, a campus-wide food drive, a Legacy of Hope fundraiser and a blanket drive and holiday fair for the local homeless shelter. His group also partnered with the We Care Homeless Shelter, a local food bank and the United Samaritan's Foundation.

Chavez's desire to give back to the community is part of his everyday life. When on break from school and back home in the Coachella Valley, he donates his time to Martha's Village and Kitchen.

For more information about the Father Donovan Scholarship and the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, visit [www.cvhc.org](http://www.cvhc.org) or call 760-347-3157.

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Located in Indio, California, about one hundred miles east of Los Angeles, the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) is an award-winning non-profit housing development corporation dedicated to helping low and very-low income families improve their living conditions through advocacy, research, construction, and operation of housing and community development projects. This year, CVHC celebrates its 30th year providing affordable housing and community development programs to hundreds of underserved families. To date, CVHC has built and owns more than 4,000 homes and apartments for low-income households in Riverside and Imperial counties. In addition, CVHC has developed childcare centers, after-school programs, and medical clinics. It operates various services for its tenants and others including mariachi classes, English as a Second Language and computer classes, a ballet folklórico program, and tennis and recreational programs. For more information visit [www.cvhc.org](http://www.cvhc.org).

