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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hmong Women's Circle nominated for three 2006 VISION awards

***Second-annual VISION Awards & Banquet: August 27, 7 p.m.;
Pearson Theatre at Concordia College St. Paul***

(St. Paul, Minn.) The Hmong Women's Circle (HWC) is one of three final nominees for VISION's Organization of the Year award, and has two nominees for the Student Outreach award. The Student Outreach nominees are Maikong Vue and the HWC group at Roosevelt Homes. The second-annual VISION Awards will take place on Sunday, August 27 at 7 p.m. at the Pearson Theatre at Concordia College-St. Paul.

Maikong, a senior at Johnson High School, has assumed many leadership roles in the HWC, including helping coordinate youth activities for new Hmong teens who recently arrived in the U.S, selling egg rolls as a group fundraiser to purchase New Year's gifts for the Hmong immigrant teens, creating a DVD that strongly portrayed Hmong women as a crucial part of the community, and presenting an informational workshop on youth leadership at the Hmong National Development Conference in Minneapolis.

"Maikong has consistently exhibited self-initiative, a passion for learning, and strong leadership," said Nou Yang, a senior membership manager at the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley. "She is an incredible young woman who is intelligent, analytical, compassionate, devoted, and an emerging Hmong woman leader."

The HWC group at Roosevelt Homes, a family congregate development owned by the St. Paul Public Housing Agency, began in 2005.

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After discussing the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the girls volunteered to pack food for the victims to make sure that the families had something to eat after this devastating event. In addition, to give back to the Hmong community, the group sold egg rolls and with the proceeds, bought New Year's gifts for Hmong teens that had recently arrived in the U.S. They also used some of the money to purchase gifts for women and children at the House of Peace, a domestic violence shelter for the Asian Pacific Islander communities.

"It is not very often that we acknowledge or notice when young people in elementary and middle school behave with such principles and set a positive example for others of all ages," said Yang.

With assistance from the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley and the Hmong National Development, Inc; the Hmong Women's Circle was founded in 1999. This program strives to help the Hmong female adolescent participants learn and celebrate their culture and history, and realize their potential to impact the community by taking healthy leadership roles in their homes, schools, and communities.

After the inaugural 1999 school year, the program received so much positive feedback from the participants, parents, and schools that it became an in-school enrichment program in various St. Paul schools. Currently, the Girl Scouts' HWC has more than 100 participants in a number of St. Paul area schools who embrace HWC program's goals and exemplify the Girl Scout mission of "building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place."

About the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley

In partnership with 7,000 adult volunteers, the Girl Scout Council of St. Croix Valley helps nearly 18,000 girls grow strong in 11 counties of eastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Girl Scouts is the world's preeminent organization for girls, building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

VISION (Validating and Inspiring Successful Initiatives for Outreach and Networks) is a Twin Cities program started in 2001 to support and empower Hmong young adults and to encourage self development through activities such as leadership seminars and other programs. For more information visit <http://www.hmongvision.org>.