For Immediate Release

NATIONAL AIDS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM NAMED IN HONOR OF AIDS EDUCATOR, ACTIVIST AND REALITY TV PIONEER PEDRO ZAMORA

• Scholarship program funded by UnitedHealthcare recognizes, supports and encourages the education of young people active in the fight against HIV/AIDS
• Applications being accepted through Oct. 15; Awardees to be announced on World AIDS Day

SAN FRANCISCO (August 15, 2014) – The National AIDS Memorial Grove announced today the naming of its youth scholarship program in honor of AIDS educator, activist and reality television pioneer Pedro Zamora, who passed away 20 years ago from an AIDS-related illness.

The Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship Program will help foster the next generation of leaders, helping support the academic efforts of emerging young people who share Pedro’s passionate commitment to ending the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

“Pedro dedicated his life to fighting the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic,” said Eric Ciasullo, National AIDS Memorial Grove board member. “Working diligently to raise public awareness, he helped arm other young people with the information and tools they needed to protect themselves against the virus. We honor Pedro’s courage and legacy through this scholarship program.”

At the age of 22, Pedro Zamora captivated the nation with his openness, compassion, vitality and charisma when he appeared on MTV’s The Real World 3: San Francisco (1994). At the veritable dawn of reality television, America watched a young Latino who was openly gay and openly HIV-positive. Viewers saw him living his life with joy and integrity, and trying to make a difference in the world.

“We are heartened that 20 years after his passing, Pedro Zamora's legacy continues on with the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship. Pedro would be so proud that his work and his fight will be carried on by the very young people he was fighting for,” said Judd Winick, Pedro’s Real World roommate and author/illustrator of the award-winning graphic memoir Pedro and Me.

The Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship Program is funded primarily through a grant provided by UnitedHealthcare, a long-standing supporter of the National AIDS Memorial Grove.

Scholarship applications are being accepted through Oct. 15, 2014 and can be downloaded from the National AIDS Memorial Grove website at www.aidsmemorial.org. Scholarship recipients will be announced on World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, 2014 with awards ranging from $2,500 to $5,000.

High school seniors, and college freshman, sophomores and juniors (ages 27 and younger) are eligible to apply. Applicants are asked to demonstrate an active commitment to fighting AIDS, taking on roles of public service and leadership, and who intend to pursue a career that will have a clear and demonstrable impact on the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
“UnitedHealthcare is honored to support the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship Program, which helps the educational efforts of young people who will continue to carry the torch that Pedro lit 20 years ago in the fight against HIV/AIDS,” said Brandon Cuevas, CEO, UnitedHealthcare of California. “This is an important program that is helping inspire the next generation of leaders who will eventually find a cure for this devastating disease.”

The scholarship program began in 2009 and has helped support the education of young people who today are engaged in a wide variety of HIV-related work both in school as well as within the chosen academic field.

Some examples include pursuing a medical degree to work with HIV-positive individuals; strengthening community-based peer-education programs targeting both high-risk and HIV+ youth and young adults in a college setting; academic studies in the fields of microbiology and computers to pursue a career in HIV research; working in an international setting providing HIV-prevention efforts; entering into the business/philanthropic community to strengthen corporate efforts to help fund community initiatives; and studying to continue working in the reproductive-health field to work with high-risk young women and addressing HIV, STDs, and reproductive health.

Further information and applications are available at www.aidsmemorial.org, or by contacting Steve Sagaser at (415) 765-0497 or ssagaser@aidsmemorial.org. Details about helping fund and support the Pedro Zamora Young Leaders Scholarship Program can also be found on the website. All donors will be recognized on World AIDS Day, when this year’s scholarship recipients are announced.

About the National AIDS Memorial Grove: The National AIDS Memorial Grove is a dedicated space in the national landscape where millions of Americans touched directly or indirectly by AIDS can gather to heal, hope, and remember. The Grove was created more than twenty years ago at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a place where those impacted by AIDS could both grieve and begin the process of healing. In 1996, The Grove was elevated as a National Memorial through legislation sponsored by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi and signed into law by President Bill Clinton. Today, more than 18,000 individuals from around the world have contributed over 135,000 volunteer hours to support The National AIDS Memorial Grove and its mission to provide, in perpetuity, a place of remembrance so that the lives of people who died from AIDS are not forgotten and the story is known by future generations. For more information visit www.aidsmemorial.org or call 415-765-0498.

# # #