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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION **NEWS RELEASE**

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STATE SCHOOLS CHIEF JACK O'CONNELL PRESENTS GOAL AWARDS TO EXTRAORDINARY STUDENTS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

SACRAMENTO — State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell will present GOAL awards to **Bridges to Youth Self-Sufficiency Project**, and to special education students, **Tarek Sinnukrot** and **Carmelita Hamdan** at a ceremony this evening at the California Department of Education offices in Sacramento.

The California Advisory Commission on Special Education created the Grazer Outstanding Achievement Learning (GOAL) award that is named after Hollywood producer, Brian Grazer. He donated \$100,000 over a 10-year period toward the award program.

"**Tarek** and **Carmelita** are perfect examples of what can happen when we set high standards for students, despite their disabilities," said O'Connell. "**Tarek** earned his diploma and is now enrolled in Rio Hondo College. He is now gaining valuable work experience while volunteering at a store. He is well on his way to self-sufficiency and the pride that comes with moving toward independence.

"**Carmelita** earned a certificate of achievement and will soon be married. She is now working in a dining room for senior citizens where she has received several promotions and an outstanding employee-of-the-year award. She has overcome incredible hurdles and has achieved financial and social independence, as well as the recognition and respect that comes from hard work.

"**Bridges to Youth Self-Sufficiency Project** has a wonderful program that provided **Tarek** and **Carmelita** with information, motivation, incentives, and assistance in realizing lives of independence. Congratulations to them all."

The California Advisory Commission on Special Education was created by federal law to provide recommendations and advice to the California State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Legislature, and the Governor in new or continuing areas of research, program development, and evaluation in California special education. The GOAL Award is one of many activities designed to celebrate the professionals and programs that serve California special education youth of all age groups.

For more information about the California Advisory Commission on Special Education, please visit [Advisory Commission on Special Education \(ACSE\) - Administration & Support](#). For more information about Bridges to Youth Self-Sufficiency Project, please visit <http://www.allenshea.com/bridges.html> (Outside Source).

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