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Vilcek Foundation awards grant to Ayazamana Cultural Center

Supports Ecuadorian children's dance program

New York City, NY (August 30, 2012) — The Vilcek Foundation announced today the award of a \$10,000 grant to fund and expand the Children's Dance Class Program at the Ayazamana Cultural Center in Queens, New York.

Founded by Ecuadorian-born dance director Jose Rivera in 1992, the Ayazamana Cultural Center promotes Ecuadorian culture in the United States by creating and sponsoring cultural events throughout the New York Tri-State area. The Center offers dance classes to children between the ages of seven and twelve, for minimal fees. Top students in these classes have the opportunity to perform with the Ayazamana Dance Company, which performs more than twelve colorful musical dances, including *Albazo*, *Bomba*, *Cachullapi*, *Marimba*, and *San Junanito*, in celebration of the multicultural demographics of Ecuador.

"The Vilcek Foundation is proud to support the Ayazamana Culture Center, a distinguished and vibrant non-profit dance company with specialized expertise in the diverse and traditional dances of Ecuador," said Rick Kinsel, Executive Director of the Vilcek Foundation.

"Our mission," he continued, "is to showcase and honor the accomplishments of foreign-born artists and scholars, as we believe there is no better way to promote a culture and its traditions than through the arts and sciences. And it gives us particular pleasure to encourage young talent through educational programs, such as those at the Ayazamana Cultural Center."

For more information about Ayazamana Cultural Center, please visit www.EcuadorianTraditions.com.

To review the Vilcek Foundation's full grant history, please visit www.Vilcek.org.

About the Vilcek Foundation:

The Vilcek Foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The mission of the Foundation, to honor the contributions of foreign-born scholars and artists living in the United States, was inspired by the couple's careers in biomedical science and art history, respectively, as well as their personal experiences and appreciation for the opportunities they received as newcomers to this country. The Foundation hosts events to promote the work of immigrants, awards annual prizes to prominent immigrant biomedical scientists, and sponsors cultural programs such as the Hawaii International Film Festival. For more information, please visit www.Vilcek.org.