

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8:30a.m.-10:30a.m. Friday, January 27, 2012

**San Diego High School Students Host Naturalization Ceremony
with USCIS and Citizenship Counts**

Citizenship Counts curriculum inspires enthusiasm in citizenship

SAN DIEGO, California– On Friday, January 27, 2012, San Diego High School will host a naturalization ceremony, conducted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), with the help of Citizenship Counts. Dr. Kirk Ankeney, a member of the Citizenship Counts Advisory Board and a principal at San Diego High, initiated local arrangements for this event. High school seniors from the School of Media, Visual, and Performing Arts and the School of International Studies recently completed the Citizenship Counts civics curriculum in teacher Ms. Arlene Harris' 12th grade government class. This curriculum will culminate with students assisting with an official naturalization ceremony, the important moment when foreign nationals pledge allegiance to this country and take on all of the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship.

Fifty individuals from countries all over the world will be sworn in as U.S. citizens on January 27, 2012. The naturalization ceremony will begin at 8:30 a.m. at San Diego High School. Citizenship Counts Founder, Holocaust survivor, 2010 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, and proud naturalized citizen Gerda Weissmann Klein will speak about the value of American citizenship and the importance of giving back to the community. USCIS Deputy Director Lori Sciallaba will administer the Oath of Allegiance to the new citizens. The ceremony will be followed by a reception prepared by students at the School of Business, and will be coordinated by student groups and Citizenship Counts to welcome the new citizens along with their families and friends.

"The educational community of San Diego High is pleased to collaborate with Citizenship Counts and USCIS to educate our students about the privileges of American citizenship," stated Ms. Harris. "As the teacher that helped students organize this celebration, I believe it is a valuable opportunity for students to welcome some of our newest American citizens as they complete this important and final step to citizenship. I believe it is important to instill patriotism and an appreciation for the value of citizenship in today's youth. San Diego High School is committed to citizenship education for its students, and we are proud to participate in this program which teaches the ideals that are paramount for our community."

The 12th grade students recently completed the Citizenship Counts interactive, multi-disciplinary civics curriculum that inspires them by providing an opportunity to participate in the democratic process while building a better understanding of the value and responsibilities of citizenship.

For media inquiries, please contact Kirk Ankeney at San Diego High School at kankeney@sandi.net or Marie Sebrechts with USCIS at marie.sebrechts@dhs.gov.

About Citizenship Counts

Citizenship Counts is a 501(c)(3), national, non-partisan organization whose mission is to *educate* today's youth on the tenets of citizenship, encourage them to *appreciate* their rights and responsibilities as Americans, and give them an opportunity to *celebrate* citizenship by engaging in a naturalization ceremony at their school or participating in a service-learning project. Please visit www.citizenshipcounts.org to learn more about our program.

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