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**Social Venture Partners announces first-ever  
Social Enterprise Rhode Island (SERI) Summit**

*Broad stakeholder group examines economic impact of  
social enterprise; plots future path for job growth in RI*

PROVIDENCE, RI (November 6, 2009) – Social Venture Partners Rhode Island (SVPRI), a nonprofit organization of social investors and change-makers, invites leaders from local and national business, academic, non-profit and governmental groups to convene and envision the impact social enterprise might have on our state's economy. The event, the [Social Enterprise Rhode Island \(SERI\) Summit](#), takes place at **8:00 AM on Thursday, November 12, 2009 at Bryant University in Smithfield, RI in the George E. Bello Center**. Social enterprise, the development of commercial endeavours that provide revenues and jobs for socially beneficial causes, is a growing force nationwide, increasing in popularity as social needs grow and the pool of charitable dollars decreases. Conference organizers believe more social enterprise in Rhode Island can attract businesses, add jobs and improve social services with less dependence on public funding.

“Social enterprise is a socioeconomic development strategy that already helps Rhode Island,” says SVPRI partner, SERI steering committee chair and Northwestern Mutual financial representative Lorne Adrain. “Some of the state's most effective non-profits operate commercial ventures like [Amos House's](#) More than a Meal, a successful catering company that provides job training for homeless people and generates income

for Amos House to feed, train and employ the poor, hungry and homeless.” New for-profit entities are being formed regularly in the Ocean State as well, many of them student-led ventures like [Runa](#).

SVPRI’s Board Chairman, Chuck Holland, notes, “Many social entrepreneurs are pioneering business models to sustain growth and drive job creation within a socially beneficial framework.” Holland continued, “They are able to grow and scale their enterprises using Rhode Island’s supportive network of business mentors, academic advisors and capital providers.”

The conference will open with remarks by Providence Mayor David Cicilline and Neil Steinberg of Rhode Island Foundation, and will feature Dr. Diana Wells, president of [Ashoka](#), the world’s leading association of social entrepreneurs and a graduate of Brown University. The [agenda](#) also includes local social entrepreneurs like Rajiv Kumar of [Shape Up Rhode Island/Shape Up the Nation](#) and Dan MacCombie of [Runa](#) who will join Rebecca Onie of [Project Health](#) and others to describe how they have driven enterprise growth with innovative business models. Panel and small group discussions will include an array of related topics such as how to increase job creation and skill development, use partnerships to advance goals, deploy marketing programs and social media and tap into the growing network of social enterprise investors, funders and supporters. The extensive [speaker roster](#) includes several local, national and global leaders from academic, business, non-profit and entrepreneurship organizations.

[Registration](#) will remain open until the day of the conference. Professional and student tickets are available, as are a limited number of scholarships.

### *About SERI*

[Social Enterprise Rhode Island](#) (SERI) is a community-building program of [Social Venture Partners Rhode Island](#) (SVPRI). Social enterprise, commercial endeavors that provide revenues and jobs for socially beneficial causes, is a growing force nationwide. With escalating social needs and declining charitable donations, policy makers and other leaders are adopting social enterprise as an economic development strategy. Meanwhile, university students are being trained to build and manage socially minded businesses to help solve crucial problems like food security, environment sustainability,

quality education, health and wellness and disabled workforce development. Non-profits also seek non-donor-based sources of revenue that social enterprise can represent. SERI was created because SVPRI partners believe social enterprise can provide: stronger, more sustainable non-profits; community workforce development; innovative businesses that respond to social needs; opportunities for “double bottom line” investments for socially minded investors; less risk and greater returns for charitable/philanthropic investment and opportunities for local corporations to improve brand and transfer professional skills into the community.

### *About SVPRI*

SVPRI is an organization of committed leaders who help Rhode Island's nonprofit and social enterprise organizations become more effective and sustainable. SVPRI partners are united by a desire to make a difference in Rhode Island and a belief that leveraging our dollars with our time and expertise will maximize our impact in helping those in our community in need. Established in 2002 with the support of the Rhode Island Foundation, SVPRI is part of an international network of over 1700 partners in 24 cities and three countries who have given more than \$21.6 million in cash and six times that amount in in-kind contributions to over 230 nonprofit organizations.

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