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MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO SETS RECORD WITH 'HANDS AROUND THE MISSION'

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (Sept. 13, 2014) – As part of the celebration marking Orange County's 125th birthday, Mission San Juan Capistrano set a world record for "largest hug around a California mission" with its Hands Around the Mission event on Saturday.

The Mission gathered more than 1,000 volunteers who combined to hold hands around the perimeter of the Mission San Juan Capistrano grounds, which measure about 11 acres. The volunteers held hands for 10 minutes for the record, which was documented via aerial photography. All participants received an official certificate of participation.

There were a number of dignitaries in attendance, including Mexican Consul Alejandra Garcia Williams, and several city council members and candidates. A variety of groups were represented, including Native Americans. Jacque Nunez of the Acjachemen Tribe gave a blessing.

The Mission also offered free admission to all Orange County residents as part of the county's birthday celebration.

Mission San Juan Capistrano, recognized as the birthplace of Orange County and the county's most historic landmark, was the primary donor for San Juan Capistrano's celebration throughout the city. There were plenty of activities throughout the city during the day's celebration, which took place at the San Juan Capistrano Library, the Los Rios District and the Historic Town Center Park.

Photos are attached. B-roll available upon request.

About Mission San Juan Capistrano:

Known as the “Jewel of the Missions,” Mission San Juan Capistrano is a historic landmark and museum that boasts of quality permanent exhibits featuring original artifacts as well as traveling and temporary exhibits on a wide variety of topics.

The site itself serves as a living outdoor museum with original buildings constructed by Native Americans in the 18th century including the Serra Chapel, Great Stone Church, and the original padres’ quarters of the South Wing.

The Mission was founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junipero Serra as the seventh in the chain of the twenty-one California missions established by Spain, and is Orange County’s only mission. Every year, over 50,000 students visit the Mission and engage in an inspirational learning experience via the Mission Matters programming, as part of their State required California history studies.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is owned by the Diocese of Orange and is supported by the Mission Preservation Foundation, which is comprised of business and community leaders committed to ensuring the long term preservation and viability of Orange County’s only Mission. The Mission receives no funding from either the Church or the State of California and charges admission funds as a means of providing public access.

Mission San Juan Capistrano is located at 26801 Ortega Highway, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. Open Daily 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Good Friday afternoon. Admission is \$9 adults; \$8 seniors (60 years or over); \$6 children (ages 4 to 11); and children ages 3 and under are admitted free. Free audio guide with senior and adult admission. For more information, call (949) 234-1300 or visit www.missionsjc.com.