The David and Lura Lovell Foundation

Contact: John C. Amoroso, Executive Director, The David and Lura Lovell Foundation,

520 325-3656 or john@lovellfoundation.org

**Lovell Foundation Presents Free Screening of “Ernie & Joe – Crisis Cops” Jan. 16**

TUCSON, AZ – The public is invited to a free screening of the award-winning film “Ernie & Joe – Crisis Cops,” a documentary on police response to mental health calls.

The event at The Loft Theatre on **Jan. 16 at 3 p.m.** also will feature a panel discussion. Tickets will be available the day of the event at the theater.

Participants include Jenifer (cq) McShane, producer and director of the film, and Joe Smarro, one of the subjects. Local panelists are Judy Kowalick, NAMI Southern Arizona; Richard Rhoads, Banner - University Medicine Crisis Response Center; Sabrina Taylor, Phoenix Police CIT Squad, and Jason Winsky, Tucson Police Department. Christina Rossetti, Rossetti Consulting Group, will moderate.

“Ernie & Joe” is described as “an intimate portrait of two Texas police officers who are helping change the way police respond to mental health calls. The film takes audiences on a personal journey, weaving together their experiences during their daily encounters with people in crisis. These two officers are not your everyday cops – they are part of the San Antonio Police Department’s 10-person mental health unit.”

The Tucson-based David and Lura Lovell Foundation helped underwrite production of the documentary and is sponsoring this local screening.

McShane produced and directed this documentary, her third. Her previous films have won awards and been broadcast on PBS. “Ernie & Joe” debuted at the DOC New York City film festival, America's largest documentary festival, in November.

McShane has said, “I believe strongly that my own contribution can be in raising awareness of tough societal issues through relatable characters and their stories. While making my last film – ‘Mothers of Bedford’ – it became evident to me that there were many people with untreated mental illness sitting behind bars.

”Upon learning of the innovative work of the San Antonio Police Department’s mental health unit and meeting Ernie and Joe in person, I felt compelled to make this film. Their jail diversion work is human and desperately needed to improve not only the health of the mentally ill but also of their families. We have seen many films illustrating the multitude of sins in police departments across the country. ‘Ernie & Joe’ introduces us to officers trying and succeeding in doing it right.”

In addition to the Lovell Foundation, “Ernie & Joe” received support from IDA Enterprise Documentary Fund, Fork Films, The Texas Mental Health Collaborative, Connecticut Office of the Arts and Lafayette Education Foundation.

The Lovell Foundation was established in 1994 by local philanthropists David and Lura Lovell. Since that time the foundation has awarded over $26 million to support more than 120 nonprofit organizations nationwide. The founders established four priorities for funding – mental health, integrative health and wellness, youth access to the arts and gender parity. Today the foundation is led by executive director John Amoroso, a board of trustees and a board of advisors. More information is at lovellfoundation.org or

(520) 325-3656.