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Schwab Announces Winners of 2010 IMPACT Awards®

Awards for Excellence in Independent Financial Advising go to Jane Williams, Sand Hill Global Advisors; The Colony Group; JMG Financial Group; Mt. Eden Investment Advisors

BOSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Today, Charles Schwab, a leading provider of custodial, operational and trading support for more than 6,000 independent investment advisory firms, announced the winners of the fifth annual IMPACT Awards® – an industry-wide awards program to honor advisors and firms that have advanced the industry through their visionary leadership, operational excellence, technology innovation and exceptional growth.

The winners were recognized during a ceremony at Schwab's IMPACT® 2010 conference, one of the nation's largest and longest-running annual gatherings of independent investment advisors. Profiles and videos of the winners are available online at <http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.impactawards.schwab.com&esheet=6486852&lan=en-US&anchor=www.impactawards.schwab.com&index=1&md5=b81597480e78e516121f4ec53c5955bd>.

“This year’s IMPACT Award winners set a high standard of excellence and integrity for the independent RIA industry”

The **Leadership Award** was presented to **Jane Williams, co-founder, president and CEO of Palo Alto, CA-based Sand Hill Global Advisors LLC**, and a long-time champion for improving financial literacy and fiscal responsibility among women. As one of the co-founders of Sand Hill in 1982, Williams with her partners determined the firm would provide fully fee-based, independent 'holistic' wealth management services, a unique concept for the time. Today, Sand Hill manages more than \$850 million in assets for high net worth entrepreneurs, individuals and families in transition, as well as for foundations and endowments. Under Williams' direction, the firm launched the Women's Wealth Network to increase financial literacy among women. Through the Women's Wealth Network, Sand Hill organizes, hosts and contributes to many events aimed at increasing financial sophistication and self-sufficiency among the firm's clients and the larger community.

Throughout her 35 years as a wealth manager, Williams has been a frequent speaker and vocal advocate of financial education for all individuals, and particularly for women in transition. She co-founded the local chapter of the Financial Women's Association, is a Senior Fellow with the American Leadership Forum, and serves as a Trustee of the UC Santa Barbara Foundation. She applies her financial planning skills to many local philanthropic organizations through participation in Boards and Advisory Boards, including the Ravenswood Family Health Center, and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. She has been recognized nationally and in her community as one of the leaders in her industry, including: named among the *San Francisco Business Times*' 100 Most Influential Business Women from 2006-2008; received the 2009 Silicon Valley Women of Influence Award; and ranked in both *Barron's* 2009 list of Top 100 Independent Investment Advisors and *Wealth Manager's* 2010 Top 50 Women in Wealth list.

The Colony Group, LLC, is the **Best-in-Business Award** winner for its excellence in business management. Since 1986, The Colony Group has evolved from a regional Boston-based practice into a national company with offices in Boston, Washington D.C., Naples and West Palm Beach serving over 700 households and managing over \$1 billion in client assets. The company is run as a business rather than as a practice, and is led by a two-person team of its founder and chief executive officer. This team is supported by a chief operating officer, chief compliance officer, general counsel, national sales director, and other operational personnel dedicated to running the company, so that the financial professionals are free to focus their full attention on client service.

The company has managed its exceptional growth by prioritizing client service and employee development. The Colony Group takes a comprehensive, team-based approach to serving clients, developing solutions based on the combined expertise of Chartered Financial Analysts®, attorneys, Certified Financial Planners®, and Certified Public Accountants. Professional

development is a central tenet of the firm's commitment to quality: in addition to a formal training program that is required for all firm professionals, each senior person is responsible for the growth and development of the individuals under his/her direction. The Colony Group has designated Quality Control Officers in both its wealth management and investment management divisions to ensure a consistent client experience and monitor trading activities. The company also incentivizes performance with awards for new business generation and for investment outperformance, and has a profit-sharing pool for all employees based on their contributions. The Colony Group and its professionals have been ranked among the top 100 independent investment advisors by *Barron's* in 2009 and 2010; among the top 100 fee-only financial advisors by *Forbes* in 2009, in *Wealth Manager's* 2009 Top Wealth Managers; in *Financial Advisor's* 2010 Top 100 Registered Investment Advisors; among *Registered Rep.'s* 2008 Top 100 Registered Investment Advisors; and among the top 10 Massachusetts-based advisors in *Worth's* list of Top 250 Wealth Advisors in 2008.

The **Best-in-Tech Award** winner is **JMG Financial Group, Ltd.**, in Oak Brook, IL, for strategically integrating third-party and custom-built technology applications to serve a growing client base without increasing staff. The firm, which currently manages over \$1 billion in client assets, developed its own custom Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system when it could not find an efficient, scalable solution that offered sufficient intra-firm privacy protections. Today, JMG's CRM is the hub of the firm's client service workflow, as well as an interface for practice management reporting. Tax data, net worth data, investment policies, asset allocations, portfolio accounting data, client reporting, meeting preparation, document management, time-keeping, and billing are some of the items integrated into JMG's CRM.

The firm has a task force in place to review, recommend and implement new technology, as well as to address and resolve potential operational inefficiencies. The team does cost-benefit analysis on the potential benefits of using commercially available products versus internally developed applications. As a result, JMG saves over 2,000 staff hours annually in client meeting preparation by using its own net worth application that extracts data directly from its portfolio accounting system. The firm also saves more than 1,000 hours annually and decreased errors by integrating gain/loss accounting with its tax preparation software. JMG has integrated document management systems with its CRM, and with its photocopier and fax server so that client inquiries can be answered without callbacks, which enhances the service experience both for the client and the employee.

The **Pacesetter Award** winner, six-year old **Mt. Eden Investment Advisors, LLC**, of San Francisco, CA, attributes its 15-20 percent annual revenue growth and early success directly to the firm's core belief in the importance of investing in institutional-class people, research, reporting and systems. This commitment has helped the firm create a strong employee culture, attract talent and yield very loyal clients. The 20-person firm with \$600 million in client assets employs veteran, credentialed investment and service professionals with more than 20- and 10-years average experience, respectively.

Mt. Eden's culture of ongoing education and development is what attracted several experienced professionals from large firms – along with their clients – during the economic downturn, so that revenues grew for the firm in 2008. The firm's commitment to education extends to paying for the majority of exam prep costs for first runs at each level of the CFA and CFP, paying society dues, and retaining an executive coach for leadership training. The firm also has a very disciplined approach to client service, with the motto "Call the client before they call you." The firm has client relationships going back well over 20 years, with 100 percent of clients joining Mt. Eden when the firm was launched six years ago. Mt. Eden has a group of "ambassador clients" who are contacted regularly and asked to speak candidly about client service decisions. New clients get a six-week check up to ensure the firm is on track; annual reviews cover service levels as well as portfolio performance. All clients receive contact trees outlining every team member's role and how the ensemble works – in short, Mt. Eden clients know there are at least three people they can contact about their portfolio.

"This year's IMPACT Award winners set a high standard of excellence and integrity for the independent RIA industry," said Bernie Clark, executive vice president and head of Schwab Advisor Services, to the more than 3,000 attendees gathered at the IMPACT conference in Boston, MA. "We applaud their dedication to investors as well as their leadership in this industry and their communities."

As part of the IMPACT Awards program, the Leadership Award winner receives a \$25,000 donation from Schwab to the charity of his/her choice; other award winners are granted \$10,000 donations from Schwab to designate to the charities of their choosing. On behalf of Jane Williams, Sand Hill Global Advisors, Schwab made a \$25,000 donation to Ravenswood Family Health Center in East Palo Alto. Schwab made a \$10,000 donation to Bay Cove Human Services on behalf of The Colony Group. Schwab donated \$10,000 to San Miguel Schools Chicago on behalf of JMG Financial Group. On behalf of Mt. Eden Investment Advisors, Schwab donated \$5,000 each to Mills-Peninsula Hospital Foundation and The Robert Packard Center for ALS Research at Johns Hopkins.

The 2010 IMPACT Awards winners were selected by a distinguished panel of judges, including Julie Littlechild, President and CEO, Advisor Impact; Edyth "Dede" Pahl, Former Executive Director, Investment Management Consultants Association; Thomas R. Robinson, Managing Director, Education, CFA Institute; and David G. Tittsworth, Executive Director, Investment Adviser Association.

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About the IMPACT Awards

Independent investment advisors have fundamentally changed the financial services landscape by providing independent investment advice to affluent investors. The IMPACT Awards, established by Schwab in 2006, recognize these contributions by honoring advisors and firms that have advanced the industry through their visionary leadership, operational excellence and technology innovation. The IMPACT Awards are judged by a panel of recognized experts and presented at IMPACT®, one of the industry's leading conferences. For more information, visit <http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.impactawards.schwab.com&esheet=6486852&lan=en-US&anchor=www.impactawards.schwab.com&index=2&md5=73d9b9c594c8d18f9cc39443a45b69be>.

About Charles Schwab

The Charles Schwab Corporation (NYSE:SCHW) is a leading provider of financial services, with more than 300 offices and 7.9 million client brokerage accounts, 1.5 million corporate retirement plan participants, 665,000 banking accounts, and \$1.47 trillion in client assets. Through its operating subsidiaries, the company provides a full range of securities brokerage, banking, money management and financial advisory services to individual investors and independent investment advisors. Its broker-dealer subsidiary, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (member [SIPC](http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sipc.org%2F&esheet=6486852&lan=en-US&anchor=www.sipc.org&index=4&md5=5b3bf4ad10048db9a390635e5702a443), <http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sipc.org%2F&esheet=6486852&lan=en-US&anchor=www.sipc.org&index=4&md5=5b3bf4ad10048db9a390635e5702a443>), and affiliates offer a complete range of investment services and products including an extensive selection of mutual funds; financial planning and investment advice; retirement plan and equity compensation plan services; referrals to independent fee-based investment advisors; and custodial, operational and trading support for independent, fee-based investment advisors through Charles Schwab Advisor Services. Its banking subsidiary, Charles Schwab Bank (member FDIC and an Equal Housing Lender), provides banking and mortgage services and products. More information is available at <http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.schwab.com%2F&esheet=6486852&lan=en-US&anchor=www.schwab.com&index=5&md5=68235d12d9d4d616e506bd34fb479e26> and <http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.aboutschwab.com%2F&esheet=6486852&lan=en-US&anchor=www.aboutschwab.com&index=6&md5=4bfb60a217f85b1a6dab64c3cf2a685d>. (1010-6715)

Contacts

Charles Schwab
Lindsay Tiles, 415-667-0479
lindsay.tiles@schwab.com
or
Makovsky + Company
Janet Yoo, 212-508-9606
jyoo@makovsky.com

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