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For Immediate Release

LVJUSD Football Players Protected With Safer Helmets

July 18, 2017 – Livermore, CA All football players at both Livermore and Granada High Schools will be better protected against concussions, thanks to the support of the Livermore Valley Education Foundation. Players received new Riddell SpeedFlex helmets, with anti-concussion technology, as part of their regulation uniform for the 2017 season.

Dana Rowley, President of the Livermore Valley Education Foundation (LVEF) met with players from both schools as they received their safer helmets. “LVEF is honored to be able to make this contribution to the safety of our student athletes. This investment will benefit all football players at both high schools for years to come,” he said.

Both Head Football Coaches, Tim Silva (GHS) and Terry Butler (LHS), said that their players are both grateful and excited to have the new helmets. Bo Buscher, Granada High School (GHS) football player, said, “We are so thankful to have these helmets. They show us that LVEF and our District care about us and appreciate us. Their support makes us want to play better.” Livermore High School (LHS) player Jose Martinez agreed. “LVEF has made safety a priority. Their giving to us inspires us to give back to our community,” he said.

“Discussion within our community, as well as in professional and collegiate football forums, has centered around player safety, and what steps can be taken to minimize risk to the student athletes, while supporting their desire to pursue athletics. I am overwhelmed by the community support for this programmatic change, and especially thankful to LVEF for their generosity. Their support has provided us the ability to equip every player, at all three levels, at both LHS and GHS with the gold standard in safety helmets,” said Craig Bueno, President, LVJUSD Board of Education.

The Livermore community recently filled the Bankhead Theater during the Rae Dorrough Speaker Series to hear Jeanne Marie Laskas, author of the book (and then movie) *Concussion*. Laskas shared the research of Dr. Bennet Omalu, which brought to light the dangers of brain trauma caused by concussions as well as by repetitive hits to the head, even those that may not result in visible concussion symptoms.

Since Omalu’s research has been available, the National Football League (NFL) and collegiate football programs have recognized the need to develop more protective helmets so that athletes can avoid developing chronic encephalopathy (CTE). Riddell’s SpeedFlex helmet reduces impact-force transfer to the athlete's head. Flex is engineered into the helmet's shell, facemask, and attachment system.

“We have a community that values scientific research as well as innovative technologies. Our District reflects those values and wants to be the leader in the Tri-Valley by bringing the safest helmets possible to our students. We are so grateful that our Foundation has made it possible for us to improve the quality of life for our student athletes,” said LVJUSD Superintendent Kelly Bowers. “These helmets can be a real life-changer,” added Dana Rowley.

“The purchase is a real testament to the commitment the Livermore School District is pursuing for the safety of their students,” said Gil Lemmon, Commissioner of Athletics for North Coast Section (NCS), California Interscholastic Federation (CIF).

Football continues to be highly popular sport that Livermore students and residents enjoy. Providing safer helmets will make Friday nights - and the daily practices that prepare athletes for competition - healthier and happier events. GHS player Jared Madar said, “I am thankful that our community is making sure we are safe doing what we love.”