

More Than 4,000 Preschoolers Join PNC To Raise Vocabulary Awareness and Set New GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS® Mark

PITTSBURGH, Oct. 30, 2014 /PRNewswire/ -- Holding tiger masks and wearing top hats, prekindergarten students from Pittsburgh Public Schools and Council of Three Rivers American Indians Center learned words and listened to their teachers read as they helped set a new GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS® title for the largest vocabulary lesson.

The 233 local students were among more than 4,000 children in 37 cities across 15 states and the District of Columbia who participated in the simultaneous lesson. The PNC Financial Services Group (NYSE: PNC) hosted the event in support of *Grow Up Great*, its \$350 million, multi-year bilingual initiative in early childhood education. The new record was set with the initial 1,031 participants documented by the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS organization. The total is expected to increase as GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS organization officials receive video and written documentation from the various locations.

"Everyone knows that the best thing you can do for young children is to read to them. By taking part in a fun and engaging activity like this, we take reading to the next level by increasing vocabulary," said Kimberly Russo, program officer, Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Education Programs. "We appreciate PNC's support of today's event, which taught the children new words and added to the excitement we're building for vocabulary in the classroom."

Vocabulary development is a priority as *PNC Grow Up Great* celebrates 10 years of helping children – especially at-risk children – prepare for kindergarten. The Fred Rogers Company and Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC), PNC's partners in early education, developed the lesson with words selected from "Mr. Tiger Goes Wild," a picture book by Caldecott Honoree Peter Brown (published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers), about a civilized tiger who, bored with his prim and proper lifestyle, runs away to the jungle to discover what makes him happy. The highly acclaimed picture book celebrates individuality and received five-star reviews.

"Vocabulary is central to a child's development. The pursuit of this world record is a great way to bring attention to a serious issue – the importance of preparing children for success in school and life," said Eva Tansky Blum, director of community affairs, PNC Bank, and chair and president of the PNC Foundation. "When we make an investment in quality early education, we help at-risk children acquire the tools needed to succeed in school, obtain meaningful employment and do well over time."

Today's event is one of PNC's initiatives to encourage parents and caregivers to talk and read to their children as a means to build vocabulary and help them gain the skills they need to succeed in school.

To foster the home to school connection, each participating child took home the book and "Words are Here, There, and Everywhere," a new, English/Spanish multimedia kit created by Sesame Workshop, the

nonprofit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*TM, as part of an ongoing partnership with PNC. The educational kit builds on young children's natural sense of curiosity to grow their vocabulary around math concepts, science, and the arts. All bilingual materials are available for free at PNC Bank branches, pncgrowupgreat.com, and sesamestreet.org/words. Additional materials are available online, including an educator's guide and a vocabulary tree.

The vocabulary lesson will be posted to an online [Lesson Center](#) which features practical, developmentally appropriate activities for pre-K teachers. Many of the lessons on the pncgrowupgreat.com site were developed by a consortium of science and cultural centers that collaborated over the past four years to enhance science and arts education for young children served by PNC's early education programs.

The success of the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS[®] attempt was made possible in part through the volunteering efforts by employees of EY, a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services, who served both as observers and stewards tracking student participation in more than 20 locations. In addition, hundreds of PNC Bank employees worked with teachers and students to help present the event as part of a progressive policy that permits up to 40 hours a year of paid time off for volunteerism.

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