PNC Foundation, DonorsChoose.org Team Up On $5 Million Initiative To Fund Pre-K Requests For Resources, Experiences

DonorsChoose.org will expand to include requests from Head Start teachers

Hundreds of thousands of students to benefit from the grant, enhanced classroom resources

PITTSBURGH and NEW YORK, April 4, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- The PNC Foundation today funded hundreds of pre-K classroom requests as part of a new $5 million grant to DonorsChoose.org to provide teachers with enhanced classroom resources and experiences to inspire their students' love of learning.

Today's donation of $504,000 flash funded 849 projects in public and charter pre-K classrooms in 22 states and Washington, D.C. where The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. ("PNC") conducts business. The PNC Foundation entered the grant-funded alliance to further the mission of PNC Grow Up Great®, a $350 million, multi-year bilingual initiative in early childhood education.

The PNC Foundation's gift to support pre-K classrooms also enables DonorsChoose.org to expand its education funding platform to include project requests from Head Start teachers for the first time. DonorsChoose.org is an online charity that connects individual donors with classrooms in need, and this is the first expansion to reach a new audience of teachers in DonorsChoose.org's 17-year history.

"We're thrilled to be a part of PNC's longstanding commitment to early childhood learning," said Charles Best, DonorsChoose.org founder. "Their generosity will help us expand the DonorsChoose.org platform to serve Head Start classrooms nationwide, ensuring that many more pre-K teachers have resources they need to give their students a solid educational foundation."

Teacher requests for educational resources range from books to art supplies, science equipment, field trips and more, according to DonorsChoose.org. Frequent requests include technology and visits from specialized educators.

A recent study conducted by the National Head Start Association showed that 94 percent of teachers say they need more resources to enrich the classroom, but 84 percent say they are unable to fund experiences they want to provide.

The study also noted that 93 percent of those queried either considered buying or bought classroom supplies out of their own pockets; 88 percent reported spending up to $500.

"Head Start supports our nation's most vulnerable children by offering a comprehensive, high quality early-learning experience that prepares them for kindergarten and strengthens family participation in their children's learning," said Yasmina S. Vinci, executive director, National Head Start Association. "Our research shows almost all Head Start teachers are spending their own dollars on basic resources for students. This is a great opportunity to empower Head Start teachers to secure the resources needed to maximize the Head Start advantage."

The PNC Foundation Will Match Donations to Pre-K Requests

Following the flash funding today, the PNC Foundation grant will also be used to match, dollar-for-dollar, donations that support pre-K and Head Start projects listed on DonorsChoose.org in the PNC footprint, subject to restrictions and a maximum dollar amount. The match is designed to encourage others to help support preschool programs in public or charter schools and Head Start classrooms. The duration of the match campaign depends on the number of project requests and donations. For specific guidelines on the match offer, visit donorschoose.org.

"PNC's work with DonorsChoose.org reflects our commitment to helping children get a strong start in life," said PNC Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer William S. Demchak. "This program will directly improve pre-K teachers' ability to help more students reach their full potential and, through their successes, will strengthen the communities we serve."

Also, the PNC Foundation will provide 14,500 PNC employees who volunteered with Grow Up Great in 2016 a $50 DonorsChoose.org electronic gift card that will enable the employee to select a classroom project for those funds. Since Grow Up Great's founding, PNC employees have logged more than 652,000 hours for the initiative through a progressive policy that allows 40 hours of paid time off each year to volunteer. Volunteers have collected more than 930,000 books, art supplies, hats, mittens and other items that have been donated for use in classrooms or for the personal well-being of preschool students.

"Our employees are a driving force behind Grow Up Great's success and impact," said Sally McCrady, president and chair of the PNC Foundation. "With this grant, we provide our employee volunteers another avenue to demonstrate PNC's continuing support of early childhood learning as a way to help children and families thrive."

Teachers and donors should visit www.DonorsChoose.org for more information.

About the Organizations
DonorsChoose.org
Founded in 2000 by a Bronx history teacher, DonorsChoose.org has raised more than $525 million for America's classrooms. Teachers come to DonorsChoose.org to request the materials and experiences they need most for their classrooms, and donors give to the projects that inspire them. More than 2.5 million people and partners have funded nearly 900,000 projects on the site, reaching 22 million students and making DonorsChoose.org the leading platform for supporting U.S. public schools. DonorsChoose.org is the only crowd funding platform that vets each request, delivers materials directly to schools, and captures the impact of every funded project with photos, thank yous, and a cost report showing how each dollar was spent. In 2014, DonorsChoose.org made the top 10 of Fast Company's list of the World's Most Innovative Companies, the first time a charity has received such recognition.

National Head Start Association
The National Head Start Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in school and in life. The opportunities offered by Head Start lead to healthier, empowered children and families, and stronger, more vibrant communities. NHSA is the voice for more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff and 1,600 Head Start grantees in the United States. Visit www.nhsa.org and follow @NatlHeadStart for more information.

PNC Foundation
The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The PNC Foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual $350 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

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Additional assets available online: Video (2) Photos (2) Documents (1)

https://pnc.mediaroom.com/2017-04-04-PNC-Foundation-DonorsChoose-org-Team-Up-To-Fund-Hundreds-Of-Pre-K-Requests-For-Resources-Experiences