PNC Foundation Awards $100,000 Grant To Momentous Institute To Create Nature Explore™ Outdoor Classroom

DALLAS, April 4, 2018 – The PNC Foundation today announced a $100,000 grant to support Momentous Institute in designing, constructing and implementing a Nature Explore™ Outdoor Classroom – a high-quality early childhood education facility for outdoor exploration, play and learning – on its campus. The Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom is a field-tested, research-based classroom design which will create experiential learning opportunities with social emotional health benefits for children ages 3 through 5.

This outdoor learning space will enhance important observation and problem-solving skills in young children, while also stimulating hands-on, spontaneous outdoor play. Momentous Institute's teachers will integrate the outdoor classroom into their lesson planning and provide instruction related to several subjects including: physical, earth and life sciences; the arts; language and literacy; and social emotional health.

"Increasing evidence suggests that access to nature and green space enhances academic performance and long-term outcomes, including stress reduction and the capacity to self-regulate," said Michelle Kinder, executive director, Momentous Institute. "The outdoor classroom will facilitate play-based education and, as seen in studies, will ultimately result in significant enhancements in children's language growth."

Momentous Institute provides resources to build and repair social emotional health in the Dallas-Fort Worth community, specifically focused on children and families who experience toxic stress due to poverty or trauma. Each year, Momentous Institute's education programs and therapeutic services reach 6,000 children and family members. The PNC grant will provide Momentous Institute with an innovative tool – the Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom – to serve its students on their journey to building social emotional health, as well as proficiency in literacy and English skills.

"Momentous Institute represents one of the most respected names in high-quality early childhood education and social emotional learning throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area," said Brendan McGuire, PNC regional president for Dallas-Fort Worth. "Their work has led to proven success in both kindergarten readiness and family life, which motivated PNC to support this work as part of PNC Grow Up Great®, our $350 million, multi-year bilingual initiative to improve early childhood education."

In addition, Kinder will share her expertise with PNC Grow Up Great by joining its 14-member advisory council. Comprised of some of the nation's leading early childhood experts in the fields of academia, education, media production and philanthropy, the council provides guidance to Grow Up Great's strategy and implementation.

About Momentous Institute

Momentous Institute, owned and operated by Salesmanship Club of Dallas since 1920, builds and repairs social emotional health in kids. Each year, Momentous Institute directly serves over 6,000 children and family members through its nationally acclaimed Momentous School and innovative therapeutic services.

Momentous Institute also invests in research and training, including the annual Changing the Odds Conference, to reach far more children than it could ever serve directly. The combined support of Salesmanship Club of Dallas, the AT&T Byron Nelson (primary fundraiser), corporations, individuals and foundations enables these efforts and truly changes the odds for kids in our community and beyond.

About PNC Foundation

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The 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 $350 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. To learn more about PNC Grow Up Great, please go to www.pncgrowupgreat.com.

For further information: Whitney Wilson (214) 871-1209 whitney.wilson@pnc.com

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