PNC Foundation Announces $350,000 In Grants For Columbus Early Education Efforts

COSI, Columbus FutureReady to receive grants as part of PNC Grow Up Great® 15th anniversary

COLUMBUS, Ohio, Oct. 25, 2019 – The PNC Foundation announced today that it is awarding a $200,000 grant to COSI and a $150,000 grant to FutureReady Columbus as part of the 15th anniversary celebration of PNC Grow Up Great®. This bilingual $500 million, multi-year initiative of the PNC Foundation helps prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

The two-year grants are designed to support the specific needs of Columbus City Schools and Franklin County early learners by providing community-based educational experiences for families with young children or professional learning and skill-development for current and future early childhood educators.

“Empowering society’s youngest minds is the best investment a bank can make,” said Mary Auch, PNC regional president for Columbus. “As a Main Street bank, we recognize that we have an important role to play in helping to ensure that all children have the opportunity to acquire and strengthen the skills they need to succeed so that our communities prosper.”

COSI plans to use the grant money toward providing STEM-based learning at nearly every preschool classroom in the Columbus City School district. The initiative gives families and caregivers access to information about early learning and connects them to fun, stimulating, age-appropriate STEM activities that will support their young children’s development and learning. In addition to in-classroom sessions, COSI’s program includes professional development for teachers, family engagement opportunities at COSI and volunteer opportunities for PNC employees.

“We are thrilled to celebrate our tenth year partnering with PNC and the Grow Up Great program,” said Columbus City Schools Superintendent/CEO Dr. Talisa Dixon. “This generous investment will provide 79 classrooms with access to developmentally appropriate research-based STEM learning activities for our early learners not only in their classrooms, but with on-site programming at COSI during the year. In addition, the families of these students will have the opportunity to participate in STEM-based exploration through several family and community engagement opportunities at COSI at no cost.”

FutureReady Columbus will use the grant to provide direct service to low-income families in publicly funded childcare throughout Franklin County. The service will include programming in support of improving and increasing vocabulary, developing a greater understanding of trauma-informed care and addressing trauma to positively impact brain development. This work will play a critical role in helping publicly funded childcare centers meet Step Up to Quality requirements under the Ohio Department of Education’s 2020 mandate.

In addition to the $350,000 grants, Auch announced that in April, PNC customers, employees and other community members collected 3,100 children’s books for distribution to early learning organizations as part

of the “Great Big Book Drive.” The books were donated to Columbus City Schools, Columbus Early Learning Centers and YMCA Head Start locations. PNC also announced that it donated 10 iPads for local YMCA Head Start sites.

PNC Bank provides employees with 40 hours of paid time off each year for Grow Up Great volunteerism. Employees could previously earn grants of up to $3,000 each year to be awarded to a partner early learning organization. For this year, PNC is doubling that amount to up to $6,000. To date, employee volunteerism has resulted in $6.6 million in grants across PNC’s markets.

Since 2004, PNC Grow Up Great has focused on helping children, especially underserved children, beyond the classroom by supporting learning and social-emotional development at home and across communities through free resources and tools provided to parents, guardians, caregivers and neighborhood organizations.

Access to high-quality early childhood education and resources is critical. Research shows that quality early education reduces dropout rates, poverty and crime while improving the skills of tomorrow’s workforce.

Highlights of PNC Grow Up Great’s impact over the last 15 years include:

- Awarding more than $160 million in grants through the PNC Foundation to support young children in the communities we serve.
- Encouraging families, caregivers and teachers to inspire a love of learning through educational resources and experiences for more than five million children.
- Demonstrating leadership by leveraging our relationships with the business community, policymakers and other key stakeholders to elevate discussions about the importance of access to high-quality early childhood education.
- Donating employee time, skills and expertise in support of the mission. Through Grow Up Great, PNC employees have contributed more than 925,000 volunteer hours and 1.4 million items for use in classrooms and the personal well-being of young children.

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 bilingual $500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

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