

PNC Grants \$1.2 Million To Expand Atlanta Pre-K Arts And Science Programs And Quality Early Childhood Education In Georgia

Fernbank Museum, Sheltering Arms, and Young Audiences, Woodruff Arts Center to Offer Activities, Field Trips, Teacher Training; Georgia Family Connection Partnership to Support Child Care Ranking System

ATLANTA, Oct. 26, 2012 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Efforts to improve arts and science skills among Atlanta preschoolers and support Georgia's quality ranking system for child care centers received a boost today in the form of \$1.2 million in grants from the PNC Foundation.

Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Sheltering Arms Early Education & Family Centers, and Young Audiences, Woodruff Art Center will share a three-year, \$1 million grant to enhance access to arts and science resources for hundreds of pre-k students, their families and early childhood educators in lower-income communities.

In addition, a \$200,000 grant from the PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (NYSE: PNC), will support Quality Rated, Georgia's new quality rating system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs.

"Georgia's children are the future of our state and have the right to a quality early education that supports their individual potential," said Georgia Governor Nathan Deal. "These funds from PNC will be used to support non-profit early care and education programs throughout Georgia as they raise their standards beyond licensing compliance and become Quality Rated."

The Georgia Family Connection Partnership will assist early childhood education centers throughout the state to help raise their quality ratings. The statewide organization will use the PNC grant to provide professional development conferences for early childhood education centers in low- to moderate-income communities. The sessions will help centers meet goals set under the state's new Quality Rated system.

"Our support of science and arts education for area preschoolers is a strategic investment to help children succeed in school and life," said PNC Chairman and Chief Executive Officer James E. Rohr. "This early education initiative represents a commitment to the rich, cultural energy that has distinguished Atlanta and furthers our investment in school readiness."

Under the arts and science initiative, more than 500 Sheltering Arms' students will benefit from field trips and an expanded arts and science focused curriculum, and their families will receive hands-on learning resources and complimentary family passes to the Fernbank Museum and Woodruff Arts. The grant will also fund professional development workshops, classroom supplies and other resources for 26 early childhood educators.

Today's grant announcements with Rohr and Eddie Meyers, PNC's regional president for Greater Georgia, mark the local launch of *PNC Grow Up Great*, a \$350 million, multi-year, bilingual initiative that began in 2004 to improve early childhood education for children from birth to age 5. To date, the program has served more than 1.5 million preschoolers and PNC employees have recorded approximately 293,000 hours through a progressive policy that permits 40 hours a year of paid time off for volunteerism.

In addition, PNC will donate 10,000 "*Happy, Healthy, Ready for School - Math Is Everywhere*" activity kits to supplement mathematics learning for participating children. Created by Sesame Workshop as part of a continuing partnership with PNC, the bilingual, multimedia kits include a guide for parents and caregivers, a children's book, along with an original *Sesame Street*TM DVD. *Math Is Everywhere* materials are available for free at all PNC Bank branches, pncgrowupgreat.com, and sesamestreet.org/math.

About Fernbank Museum of Natural Science

Atlanta's Fernbank Museum of Natural History inspires discovery and exploration for visitors of all ages as it unfolds the story of the planet and its inhabitants through award-winning exhibitions, IMAX® films, and innovative programs. Visitors come face to face with the world's largest dinosaurs, explore the development of life on Earth through Georgia's modern landscapes, connect with cultures from around the world, and engage in learning through a variety of science-based, hands-on programs. Fernbank also features a world-renowned archaeology collection and research program, as well as the country's largest

undisturbed urban Piedmont forest—unparalleled resources that help the museum offer unmatched experiences that stimulate learning through science, nature and human culture. Fernbank is accredited by the American Association of Museums, a distinction awarded to less than 5 percent of museums in the United States.

About Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers

Sheltering Arms Early Education & Family Centers is one of Atlanta's oldest, largest, and most respected nonprofits, providing nationally-acclaimed, effective early education and child care for 2,500 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers each day. Founded by volunteers in 1888, Sheltering Arms is different because of its quality, because it serves all families regardless of income, and because its comprehensive services build strong families and communities. To make a tax-deductible donation or for more information on Sheltering Arms, please call Paige McKay Kubik at 404-523-2849 or visit Sheltering Arms' website at www.shelteringarmsforkids.com.

About Young Audiences, Woodruff Arts Center

Young Audiences, Woodruff Arts Center is an affiliate of the nation's largest arts-in-education organization, Young Audiences, Inc. and Georgia's leading provider of educational arts programming. Since 1983, Young Audiences, Woodruff Arts Center has pursued its mission – to transform the lives and learning of young people through the arts – by bringing the power of live arts experiences in music, dance, theatre, literary, and visual arts to young people from preschool through high school. Each year the organization's curriculum-based programs reach more than 300,000 students in schools, recreation centers, libraries, museums, and other community venues throughout the state of Georgia. For more, visit www.yawac.org.

About PNC

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group, 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. For more information, please visit www.pncgrowupgreat.com and www.youtube.com/PNC or follow @PNCGrowUpGreat on Twitter.

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