

'PNC Grow Up Great' Kicks Off with \$500,000 in Grants, Media Campaign and New Volunteer Policy

-- PNC rolls out nation's largest program of its kind to improve school readiness -

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"PNC Grow Up Great," the \$100 million investment in early childhood education by The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., was kicked off today with \$500,000 in grants, an advisory council of experts and a print and broadcast media campaign to increase public awareness of the need to raise the nation's level of school readiness.

PNC created this program to better prepare children from birth to age five for school through grants to non-profit early education organizations, volunteerism, advocacy and awareness during the next 10 years. Joining PNC and its 24,000 employees are experts in the field, including Sesame Workshop, PBS member stations and Family Communications, Inc., the producers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." Its first-year pilot program will focus on Head Start centers throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Kentucky and Delaware.

"As the largest school readiness program of its kind in the United States, PNC Grow Up Great will help our children, families and communities become smarter, stronger and healthier," said James E. Rohr, chairman and chief executive officer of PNC. "We see this program as an excellent investment in the future of the communities we serve. Improvements in school readiness will have a major impact on children's success in school and life."

Research shows that a five-year-old from an underserved family starts school 18 months behind his or her peers in vocabulary development, which has a profound effect on reading ability and general comprehension. Meanwhile, an estimated 40 percent of the nation's children reach fourth grade unable to read with proficiency, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Phase I Highlights

Through the collaboration of PNC and its partners, the first phase of PNC Grow Up Great includes the following elements announced today:

Grants Exceed \$500,000: The PNC Foundation's first phase of PNC Grow Up Great grants total \$503,000 to be divided among 12 early education organizations, including Head Start centers. Established in 1965, Head Start was chosen for a first-year pilot based on its successful history of addressing the developmental needs of the whole child, emphasis on volunteerism and uniform reach across communities served by PNC. Nearly \$50 million of PNC's overall investment will be devoted to grants to non-profit early education organizations over the next 10 years.

New Policy Supports Volunteerism: PNC employees are eligible for up to 40 hours of paid time off to volunteer as the result of a new policy announced today. With a yearly goal of 100,000 volunteer hours toward school readiness, PNC has created a special website for its employees. Volunteer opportunities include: tutor children; lead financial literacy seminars for parents; serve as board members, technology consultants; painting and upkeep among other roles. Over the past three years, PNC employees have volunteered one million hours to numerous community causes.

Media Campaign Raises Awareness: Public awareness announcements in print, broadcast and Internet outlets (including www.pnc.com) were launched this month to heighten awareness of the issue and highlight resources for children, parents and educators. The program combines the strengths and public outreach of PNC and its partners along with select TV network affiliates and public TV stations in unprecedented community partnerships. The efforts include:

* Underwriter of Sesame Street programming and interactive content on www.sesameworkshop.org. The collaboration between PNC and Sesame Workshop has resulted in the creation of content through innovative resources for parents, caregivers and children that will be distributed for free to thousands of recipients over the next three years. This includes the new "Happy, Healthy, Ready for School" kits.

* Underwriting of PBS Kids programming and collaboration with PBS stations on workshops, where thousands of parents and caregivers will learn how to enhance the development of young children.

* Collaboration with Family Communications to develop training for PNC employee volunteers prior to their work with children. It also will provide training for non-profit organizations on how to maximize the skills and talents of PNC volunteers.

Advisory Council Shares Insights: PNC and its partners are creating visibility and discussion to heighten interest and influence public policy. Supporters include the Advisory Council (see today's related announcement) composed of well-known researchers, medical professionals, authors, government officials and nonprofit leaders, including W. Steven Barnett, PhD, director of the National Institute for Early Education Research. Locally based committees led by PNC's Regional Presidents are helping to direct resources and implement day-to-day operations

The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC) is one of the nation's largest diversified financial services organizations, providing regional community banking; wholesale banking, including corporate banking, real estate finance and asset-based lending; wealth management; asset management and global fund services.

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