

PNC Grow Up Great and St. Louis Organizations To Help Underserved Preschoolers

- PNC Foundation Investment of \$500,000 to Grace Hill Settlement House and \$185,000 Shared Among Four Other Partners -

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 16, 2010 – The [PNC Foundation](#) today announced a four-year, \$500,000 grant to Grace Hill Settlement House to help 250 underserved St. Louis children develop math and reading skills for kindergarten, as well as cognitive and social skills, critical to early success in the classroom. The PNC Foundation also announced additional grants totaling \$185,000 to support Grow Up Great programming partners with Grace Hill Settlement House: Maryville University, Missouri Botanical Garden, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and St. Louis Science Center.

Today's announcement signifies the PNC Foundation's first major investment in the St. Louis area through its signature philanthropic initiative, PNC [Grow Up Great](#), a 10-year, \$100 million bilingual program to improve early childhood education. The grant for the program was made possible by the PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (NYSE: PNC).

PNC Grow Up Great will help make preschool readiness resources more accessible to educators and parents in the St. Louis community, with a focus on:

- Encouraging interest in science, nature and music while developing math and reading readiness skills;
- Developing important cognitive and social skills through play;
- Supporting professional development of teachers through training;
- Exposing children to innovative technology combined with curriculum to create an uninhibited, fun learning environment;
- Educating parents on how to best use the resources available to them.

PNC Regional President Rick Sems made today's announcement at the Piper Palm House in Tower Grove Park. Preschoolers from Grace Hill were treated to a cold air balloon inflate where they were able to run inside the inflated balloon on the ground and learn about the science of air and what makes hot air balloons fly.

"Research has shown us that children who are prepared for kindergarten are far more likely to experience greater educational achievements, strive toward higher vocational aspirations and contribute to society later in life," said Sems. "For these reasons, over the last six years, PNC has demonstrated a strong commitment to early childhood education through our Grow Up Great initiative which uses grants, employee volunteerism and advocacy for this issue. We're excited to make the program possible and look forward to building upon our legacy of giving within the region by supporting school readiness for local children."

Also on site at today's announcement was the PNC Mobile Learning Adventure (MLA), a traveling exhibit

that provides an opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn about the importance of early childhood education while they engage in fun activities with their children. A part of PNC Grow Up Great, the MLA includes the "When I Grow Up" station, where kids dress up as different professionals and have their picture superimposed on an appropriate background. PNC is also providing 4,000 "Happy, Healthy, Ready for School - Math is Everywhere" activity kits to Grace Hill, the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Youth in Need and Riverbend Head Start. The kits will help parents demonstrate how to take everyday moments and turn them into math learning opportunities.

"The years before kindergarten provide the foundation for children's success in school and beyond. Maryville University will be providing early childhood curriculum development, teacher training, and program evaluation to help broaden the impact of PNC Grow Up Great," explained Dr. Sam Hausfather, dean of the Maryville University School of Education. "Through our work with Grace Hill Head Start and the cultural partners, we all are collaborating to better the education and prospects for young children in St. Louis. We thank PNC for the opportunity to make a long term difference in our community."

"All too often, field trips are planned in isolation to the overall learning experience in the classroom with little thought about the long-range educational impact they can have on the student and their future academic growth and success," said Roderick Jones, executive director, Grace Hill Settlement House. "PNC Grow Up Great provides a multi-dimensional experience. Research shows a greater transfer of learning when the field trip is related to classroom teaching and the broader instructional program."

In addition to expanding resources to support early childhood education for area preschoolers, PNC Grow Up Great will provide opportunities for PNC Bank employees to volunteer in support of the programs, a hallmark of PNC Grow Up Great.

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 its signature cause, Grow Up Great, PNC has created a 10-year, \$100 million initiative to enhance early childhood education and school readiness.

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