Betty Brinn Children's Museum Receives Grant To Create Environmental Program For Area Preschoolers

- Grants of $365,000 will establish Pocket Park exhibit and fund additional educational initiatives as part of local PNC Grow Up Great launch in Milwaukee -

MILWAUKEE, Wis., Nov. 18, 2010 – The PNC Foundation today announced a grant to the Betty Brinn Children's Museum to create a park-like exhibit that explores environmental stewardship and fresh water conservation. The new area in the Museum's South Gallery, called Pocket Park, will offer hands-on learning opportunities for area preschoolers, which will help build critical academic and social skills, and family activities focused on the environment and natural resources.

A portion of the $365,000 in new grants from the PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group, will also support arts, math and literacy programs offered by four regional nonprofit organizations to underserved children. The announcements signify the first major grants PNC has made in the Milwaukee area through its signature philanthropic initiative, Grow Up Great, a 10-year, $100 million bilingual effort to improve early childhood education.

"Our support of the Betty Brinn Children's Museum and the additional organizations is a strategic investment to improve school readiness in Greater Milwaukee," said PNC Regional President Beth Wnuk, speaking on behalf of the PNC Foundation. "Research has shown that children who are ready for kindergarten are more likely to graduate from high school, strive toward higher vocational aspirations and contribute to society later in life."

The $230,000 five-year grant to the Children's Museum will fund the development of the following distinct learning spaces as part of Pocket Park:

- The Ecology Center – a kid-sized center with hands-on activities that promote environmental stewardship
- Pocket Park Pond – features engaging activities that demonstrate the importance of clean water to the community
- The Community Garden – provides a pretend setting that highlights family gardening projects, healthy foods and the positive impact of locally grown produce on the environment

"PNC's generous support of the Betty Brinn Children's Museum will enable us to continue providing interactive exhibits and educational resources that promote the healthy development of children in their formative years," said Museum Executive Director Fern Shupeck. "Grow Up Great's special emphasis on school readiness and underserved children is a natural fit with the Museum's mission. Pocket Park will reach more than a million people over the next 5 years, including many of our community's most vulnerable families who stand to benefit most from early childhood education."

As part of the local PNC Grow Up Great initiative, other grant recipients include:

- First Stage Children's Theater, which received a $42,000 grant to support its early education series,

designed for early learners and families. In addition, its literacy residency program, which received funding from PNC for its successful 2009 pilot, will host 14 teacher training workshops at 10 early education classrooms.

- Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, which received $40,000 to support two distinct programs, one of which integrates the arts and music into daily core subjects for 9,000 students in 23 public and private schools. The other program offers Sunday afternoon performances that enable young listeners to relate to musical themes.
- Wehr Nature Center, which received a $35,000 grant to create the PNC Kids in the Park program. It will provide opportunities for young children to learn about nature and train caregivers and teachers to facilitate outdoor learning and play. Approximately 600 children from 12 schools will participate in three seasonal outdoor fieldtrips.
- Milwaukee Center for Independence, which received an $18,000 grant to support a family-centered math literacy program to enhance services for low- to moderate-income families with children ages 0-5.

PNC Bank employees will offer classroom and other support for many of these activities. In addition, PNC will donate 4,000 "Happy, Healthy, Ready for School – Math Is Everywhere" activity kits, one for each student within Milwaukee Public Schools' Head Start program, the United Community Center, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, and the Next Door Foundation. The kits were created by Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street TM, as part of a continuing partnership with PNC. The math activity kits are available for free at all PNC Bank branches, pncgrowupgreat.com and sesamestreet.org/math. Additionally, the Math Is Everywhere video is available, at no charge, on Amazon.com VOD and on iTunes (iTunes.com).

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (NYSE: PNC), 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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