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PNC Grow Up Great Collaborates With Chicago Institutions to Boost Science Skills for Underserved Preschoolers

- PNC Foundation investment leverages resources of Adler Planetarium, Field Museum, Museum of Science and Industry and Shedd Aquarium on behalf of Chicago Public Schools and Big Shoulders Fund -

- Sesame Workshop issues new Math Is Everywhere activity kit with DVD as part of continuing partnership with PNC -

CHICAGO, Sept. 15 /PRNewswire/ -- The PNC Foundation today announced \$3 million in grants to four of Chicago's premier institutions to enhance science education for underserved students in preschool programs operated by Chicago Public Schools and the Big Shoulders Fund. PNC will also donate 40,000 of the newly released *"Happy, Healthy, Ready for School – Math Is Everywhere"* activity kits, created by Sesame Workshop, to supplement mathematics learning in the two pre-k programs.

The initiative leverages the expertise of the Adler Planetarium, The Field Museum, Museum of Science and Industry and Shedd Aquarium, which will work collaboratively to improve early science learning and increase access to community science resources.

As part of the new program, classrooms will be provided kits of science equipment, tools and materials which are both durable and flexible. Experts from each organization will work with teachers to create hands-on activities to aid the children's exploration of science. Participating pre-school teachers will receive professional development to increase their knowledge and confidence in teaching science. In addition, families of pre-school children will be encouraged to explore science further through free visits to the museums' interactive exhibits. PNC employees will serve as volunteers for many of these activities.

"Our support of science and math education for Chicago preschoolers is a strategic investment to address the changing needs of an economy that is increasingly based on knowledge and skills," said PNC Chairman and Chief Executive Officer James E. Rohr.

The grant marks the local launch of *PNC Grow Up Great*, a 10-year, \$100 million bilingual program to improve early childhood education. It is the latest investment by the PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (NYSE: PNC), in math and science education initiatives, which have totaled more than \$9 million over the past 18 months across several states.

"A quality preschool program creates a foundation for success," said Ron Huberman, chief executive officer of the Chicago Public Schools. *"PNC Grow Up Great* enables us to build on

our existing Chicago Math and Science Initiative and provides support for teachers and parents to help children achieve in these two disciplines."

The investment by the PNC Foundation will support the science initiative over a three-year period and provides for an independent evaluation of the program's success. The second- and third-year funding is contingent on each institution's successful completion of the prior year's project goals. More than 1,000 children are expected to benefit from the programming funded by the grants.

One of Chicago's leading school readiness authorities, Barbara Bowman, chief officer of early childhood education for Chicago Public Schools, will share her expertise with *Grow Up Great* by joining its 12-member advisory council. Comprised of leading experts in the fields of education, medicine, academia and philanthropy, the council provides guidance to *Grow Up Great*'s strategy and implementation.

Gift of Kits: *Math Is Everywhere*

Included in today's announcement was the national release by Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, of *Happy, Healthy, Ready for School! – Math Is Everywhere*, a new mathematics activity kit created for *Grow Up Great* through a continuing partnership with PNC. The announcement was made by Gary E. Knell, President and CEO of Sesame Workshop and the loveable Muppet, Rosita. The collaboration between Sesame Workshop and PNC was hailed by the White House last fall as an example of public-private partnerships that encourage young people to excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

"*Math Is Everywhere* will highlight everyday experiences at home, in school, and at places where children are on the go," said Knell. "We are excited to continue our partnership with PNC providing parents, caregivers, and educators with developmentally and educationally appropriate information and resources to support and extend young children's exploration and understanding of early mathematics."

Rohr presented a gift of the "*Math Is Everywhere*" kits to Chicago Public Schools and the Big Shoulders Fund, one for each child in their pre-k programs. The bilingual, multimedia kits include a guide for parents and caregivers, a children's book, along with an original *Sesame Street(TM)* DVD that follows Abby, Elmo, and their Sesame friends in a math treasure hunt as they search for Abby's lost wand -- complete with songs and videos of children discovering mathematics. An educator's guide is also available online to provide ideas for early childhood teachers to incorporate in their classrooms.

Math Is Everywhere materials are available for free at all PNC Bank branches, pncgrowupgreat.com, and sesamestreet.org/math. Additionally, the *Math Is Everywhere* video will be available, at no charge, on Amazon.com VOD and on iTunes (iTunes.com).

About the Organizations

The Big Shoulders Fund is a not-for-profit organization that was founded by a group of businessmen in 1986, inspired by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, to sustain the inner-city Catholic school system. The mission of the Big Shoulders Fund is to provide support to the schools that serve the poor and disadvantaged in the neediest parts of inner-city Chicago and ensure that every child has access to a quality, values-based education, regardless of ethnic, racial or religious backgrounds. Since its inception, Big Shoulders Fund has raised more than \$192 million and provides \$10 to \$12 million each year to

support 93 inner-city Catholic schools serving nearly 24,000 children, of which 80 percent minority, 61 percent living in poverty and 32 percent are not Catholic. One hundred percent of funds raised by the Big Shoulders Fund support scholarships, special education programs, instructional enhancements, facility improvements, and operating grants. The Fund is a private, 501(c) (3) non-profit entity that receives and distributes privately raised contributions to needy inner-city Catholic schools. For more information, visit www.bigshouldersfund.org or call 312-751-8337.

Chicago Public Schools serves approximately 409,000 students in 670 schools. It is the third-largest school district in the nation.

The Adler Planetarium – America's First Planetarium – was founded in 1930 by Chicago business leader Max Adler. The Adler is a recognized leader in science education, with a focus on inspiring young people to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math. In 2009, the Adler launched *Lift-Off!* Campaign for Chicago's Space Center to transform the museum in to the world's premier space science center. The Campaign will support new exhibitions and theater experiences, education and outreach programs. Learn more at www.adlerplanetarium.org/liftoff.

Chicago's Field Museum is one of the world's great museums and it is a focus of public learning and scholarly research. It's a treasury of more than 23 million objects including ancient mummies, endangered plants and animals and Sue, the largest and most complete *T. rex* ever found. Above all, The Field Museum is an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages. Named for its founding donor, department store magnate Marshall Field I, the Museum first opened its doors in 1894. Today, it presides proudly over Chicago's lakefront Museum Campus, its majestic halls and acres of exhibitions welcoming visitors from around the world.

The Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (MSI) offers thousands of fun and interactive exhibits and one-of-a-kind, world-class experiences to inspire the inventive genius in everyone. Through its Center for the Advancement of Science Education, MSI also aspires to a larger vision: to inspire and motivate our children to achieve their full potential in science, technology, medicine and engineering. Come visit and find *your* inspiration! MSI is open every day except Dec. 25, and regular hours are 9:30 to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. The Museum is supported in part through the generosity of the people of Chicago through the Chicago Park District. For more information, find MSI online at msichicago.org or call (773) 684-1414 or (800) GO-TO-MSI outside of the Chicago area.

John G. Shedd Aquarium, a nonprofit institution dedicated to public education and conservation, is among one of the world's largest indoor aquariums. The facility houses over 32,000 aquatic animals representing some 1,500 species of fishes, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, birds and mammals from waters around the world. Beautifully situated on the shores of Lake Michigan, Shedd Aquarium is known as "The World's Aquarium." Since opening in 1930, the aquarium's mission has been to enhance public understanding and appreciation of the aquatic world. Today, this educational goal has gained urgency and Shedd Aquarium is committed to a number of projects designed to preserve threatened or endangered aquatic species.

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit educational organization that revolutionized children's television programming with the landmark *Sesame Street*. The Workshop produces local *Sesame Street* programs, seen in over 140 countries, and other acclaimed shows to help

bridge the literacy gap including *The Electric Company*. Beyond television, the Workshop produces content for multiple media platforms on a wide range of issues including literacy, health and military deployment. Initiatives meet specific needs to help young children and families develop critical skills, acquire healthy habits and build emotional strength to prepare them for lifelong learning. Learn more at www.sesameworkshop.org.

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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