

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KidZone Philadelphia Enhances Reading Success for Students at Pastorius Elementary School in Northwest Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA – February 20, 2009 - Foundations' KidZone Philadelphia is pleased to announce a \$5,000 grant from Verizon to enhance reading success for students in grades 3 and 6 at Francis D. Pastorius Elementary School in Northwest Philadelphia. The initiative, called *The Family Literacy Project*, will help parents learn how to support the fundamental role they play in their child's literacy learning by becoming a partner in their child's literacy education.

The goal of *The Family Literacy Project* is to support literacy proficiency by the end of grade 3, one of the most significant markers for student achievement and success in school and life. An additional outcome of the *Family Literacy Project* is to share knowledge with families about methods to help make reading a fun and rewarding family activity.

The Family Literacy Project will draw upon the experience and expertise of KidZone's network of community partners as well as the Songhai Press Corporation, whose program is approved and recommended annually by the School District of Philadelphia as among the best in supplemental Core Curriculum Programs. KidZone will work with Songhai to host workshops for parents that offer an opportunity to actively participate in their child's learning and create literacy-rich home environments. An additional feature of the project is that teachers and students will work directly in the classroom with Songhai Press-trained writing coaches to write, illustrate and publish a book that can be shared with family and friends for years to come.

KidZone's *Family Literacy Project* supports Foundations' Community Education Initiative's (CEI's) mission to transform educational experiences for children and youth in Northwest Philadelphia through collaborative community partnerships designed to improve academic achievement, and to ensure that all students are ready for high school, college and the world of work.

"We are truly grateful to Verizon. This type of support from Verizon reflects the interests that our corporate partners have in doing what they can to enhance our

students' success with reading and school.” states Albert Bichner, Executive Director of Foundations’ Community Education Initiatives. “Even though many companies are facing their own economic challenges, it is important that we all work together to improve our children’s opportunities for a brighter future.”

KidZone Philadelphia was founded on a simple idea: The best places to grow up are those where people support one another and invest in each other’s success. KidZone Philadelphia was launched in 2006 by Foundations, Inc. as a multi-faceted, 10-year project to address the challenges faced by disadvantaged families in Northwest Philadelphia. There are 196,000 residents in the seven KidZone zip codes, which are: 19118, 19119, 19126, 19131, 19138, 19144, and 19150. KidZone has developed an interconnected series of programs that direct education, health, and social services to those who need them most.

Foundations, Inc., a nonprofit organization, is committed to building the quality of educational opportunities for children, youth, and families through work with public and charter schools, school districts, education and community-based organizations, and the afterschool field. As a capacity-building organization, Foundations focuses on professional development, technical assistance, program development, and supporting tools, publications, and services.

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