



***SESAME WORKSHOP AND PNC FOUNDATION JOIN
WHITE HOUSE EFFORT ON STEM EDUCATION***

***Announce \$7.5 Million Investment in Mathematics and Science for Preschoolers;
Builds Upon PNC's \$100 Million Grow Up Great Initiative***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Washington, D.C., November 23, 2009 – In response to a national call to action for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education, President Barack Obama was joined today by Gary E. Knell, president and CEO of Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*, and Eva Tansky Blum, chair and president of the PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., to announce a \$7.5 million investment in mathematics and science education for preschoolers.

Sesame Workshop and PNC, via its 10-year, \$100 million *Grow Up Great* program, will create a new mathematics initiative for preschool children as well as a two-year science initiative, which enables children to build their knowledge of the world around them through scientific inquiry.

The science initiative launched as part of *Sesame Street's* 40th season, which kicked off on Nov. 10, 2009, is designed to increase positive attitudes towards nature, deepen children's knowledge about the natural world and encourage behavior that shows respect and care for the environment. *PNC Grow Up Great with Science*, announced on April 21, 2009, provides \$6 million in grants to numerous science centers and non-profit organizations to give preschool children more opportunities to learn science basics and help preschool teachers with science curriculum.

“Ensuring today's children are prepared with the mathematics and science skills they need to compete in a global world must be a national priority, and Sesame Workshop is privileged to stand up with PNC to help support President Obama's call to action,” said Knell. “Through a combined new preschool initiative, *Math is Everywhere*, and *Sesame Street's* highly-engaging focus on science education this season, we hope to bolster children's learning in this area and hopefully pave the way for a future of mathematicians and scientists.”

“This collaboration on math and science education with Sesame Workshop, the leader in educating young children, comes at a time when many educators echo President Obama in his request for increased emphasis in these disciplines,” said Blum. “Our support of science education initiatives for preschoolers is another strategic investment to help our non-profit partners, preschools and caregivers develop stronger, smarter and healthier families and communities.”

New Initiative: *Math Is Everywhere*

Mathematics and science education has generated much interest in recent years, as children in the United States continue to lag behind their international peers. The new initiative, *Math is Everywhere (MIE)*, will strive to break through this impasse by developing highly engaging multiple media, bilingual (English and Spanish) resources that establish the foundation of early mathematic skills for young children along with best practices for the adults in their lives, including parents, childcare providers and educators.

The initiative created by Sesame for PNC, is designed for children ages 2 to 6 years. It connects learning in school to learning at home using everyday moments to explore mathematical concepts and reasoning, such as numbers, shapes, spatial relations, measurement, and problem solving.

One of the main goals of *MIE* is to empower children to learn and use mathematics, but also to help the adults in their lives to recognize that everyone does mathematics everyday as it is one important way to understand the world around us.

The project complements [Sesame Street's 40th season](#), of which PNC is a sponsor, with “**My World is Green & Growing**,” a two-year initiative embracing a robust science and mathematics curriculum. Twenty of the 26 episodes have a focus on STEM, 13 focus on science and seven focus on mathematics. Further, twelve out of the 26 words from *Sesame Street's* literacy initiative, “Word on the Street,” focus on mathematics and science. In association with Green & Growing, PNC will be distributing outreach materials for children and their families, teachers, and caregivers, encouraging exploration of the natural world.

For season 41, *Sesame Street* will address the processes of scientific investigation, with 13 shows focused on this topic. One of the main curricular goals is to encourage children to think scientifically and to model the four steps of the scientific process including: 1) asking questions; 2) experimentation; 3) observation; and 4) reporting. For example, through scientific inquiry, children will investigate thunderstorms, gravity, wind, rocks, camouflage, as well as the different attributes of birds and bugs.

Today's announcement builds on ongoing efforts by Sesame Workshop and PNC to improve mathematics and science education. Earlier this year, Sesame Workshop joined PNC in announcing a new planetarium show, *One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure*, which includes a portable dome and outreach materials, to provide children at Head Start and other early education centers an opportunity to explore the night sky. [One World, One Sky](#), was produced by Sesame Workshop with the Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum (Chicago), Beijing Planetarium, and Liberty Science Center (Jersey City, NJ) as a bi-national, China-U.S. cooperative project for children ages 4-6 and their families, teachers, and caregivers. This program also received major funding from the National Science Foundation with additional support from the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation, China Association for Science and Technology and the National Natural Science Foundation of China and provides young children in China and the U.S. with an age-appropriate introduction to astronomy. The initiative also promotes positive attitudes toward science among children in each country and fostered cross-cultural appreciation.

In addition, Sesame Workshop has also included a deep STEM connection in [The Electric Company](#), Sesame Workshop's multi-media literacy project for struggling readers ages 6-9. In Season 1, nearly 40% of all vocabulary words taught and more than 50% of episode storylines deal with science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Throughout *The Electric Company* characters use technology in every episode.

Separately, [The Joan Ganz Cooney Center](#) at Sesame Workshop announced the *Cooney Prizes for Innovation*, a competition that encourages innovation and invites entrepreneurs to develop new ideas and digital prototypes to promote STEM and literacy learning. The Cooney Center is collaborating with a public-private partnership including the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Entertainment Software Association, the Information Technology Industry Council, the MacArthur Foundation, Games for Change and E Line Media to operate the prize program, which will launch in January 2010.

National Priority: Math and Science Education

According to the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, the United States ranked 11th and 9th respectively for 4th and 8th grade mathematics competency in global tests. Additionally, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which released its historic Nation's Report Card earlier this fall, found fourth-graders have made no learning gains since 2007, when the last time the NAEP Mathematics test was given, representing the first time since 1990 that no scoring gains had been made.

President Barack Obama has made bolstering efforts to improve STEM education a national priority. In April, he called for a national campaign to raise American students "from the middle to the top of the pack in science and math over the next decade." Today's announcement is an important step towards improving participation and performance of America's students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

About Sesame Workshop

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* and *Pinky Dinky Doo*. 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.

About PNC Grow Up Great

The PNC Foundation recognizes that learning in a child's early years is essential for their long-term success. Through *PNC Grow Up Great*, we provide the leadership, advocacy, funding, tools, and volunteers to help educate parents, caregivers, and communities on how to prepare young children for school and life. Equal access to quality preschool programs can result in long-term benefits for our children, society, workforce and economy. The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC) is one of the nation's largest diversified financial services organizations.

Since its 2004 launch, *PNC Grow Up Great* has contributed more than \$17 million in grants to enhance preschool programs, 125,000 hours in PNC employee volunteerism, and donated more than 100,000 items. PNC's donations range from mittens and gloves, to materials for science and arts projects, books and toothbrushes for preschool children. PNC encourages employee involvement through a progressive policy that permits 40 hours a year of paid time off to volunteer.

PNC Grow Up Great has assembled an advisory council of impressive early childhood experts from academia, medical professions and not-for-profit leaders to provide issue expertise and guidance for the program. PNC and Sesame Workshop also created the bilingual educational kit, "Happy, Healthy, Ready for School: Learning is Everywhere." More than 500,000 free kits have been distributed to provide helpful tips and fun activities for children and families to turn everyday moments into learning opportunities.

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