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BIG THOUGHT ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL \$4.3 MILLION INVESTMENT FROM THE WALLACE FOUNDATION TO EXPAND CITYWIDE PARTNERSHIP

Phase II of the Thriving Minds initiative will focus on providing comprehensive academic, enrichment and social services to children across Dallas

DALLAS, TEXAS (Jan. 14, 2010) – At an announcement held today at Charles Rice Learning Center in South Dallas, Big Thought revealed that The Wallace Foundation has funded a \$4.3 million grant to continue funding Thriving Minds, a groundbreaking creative-learning partnership that includes the City of Dallas, Dallas ISD and more than 100 arts, cultural and community organizations. The grant will allow the Thriving Minds partnership to expand programs and services that ensure every Dallas child has access to learning opportunities that allow them to think creatively, excel academically, make healthy life choices and contribute to their communities.

Big Thought, which serves as managing partner of Thriving Minds, received an initial \$8 million grant from The Wallace Foundation in 2006 to launch the initiative. The foundation, which supports effective ideas and practices in education leadership, arts participation and out-of-school learning, in its new grant will support: 1) raising the quality of arts instruction in and out of school and expanding professional development opportunities for educators; 2) linking out-of-school arts to the school curriculum; 3) adapting for nationwide use a quality assessment tool; and, 4) launching two learning hubs in communities with high needs for arts programming.

“The Wallace Foundation’s renewed support of Thriving Minds is a testament to the power of public-private partnerships to transform the lives of thousands of children. It will truly impact the future of our city,” said Gigi Antoni, president and CEO of Big Thought. “This powerful partnership is unlike any in the country. Combining the resources offered by the City of Dallas, Dallas ISD and our 100-plus partners with the generosity of donors, we’re able to multiply many times over our outreach and impact on Dallas children and families.”

Annually, Thriving Minds serves more than 300,000 children and families through one million hours of programming and instruction. In the last three years, the initiative has supported Dallas ISD in instituting district-mandated fine arts instruction for elementary students and funded the development of a new fine arts curriculum for grades Pre K-12. It also supported in school residencies taught by professional artists and field trips to the city’s museums and cultural institutions for nearly 90,000 students. Additionally, this grant helped fund free and low-cost enrichment programs for children and their families in schools, libraries, recreation and cultural centers, and other facilities across the city after-school, during the evenings and weekends, year-round.

Phase II of the initiative will kick off in South Dallas, a community well-versed in the power of local collaboration. JPMorgan CHASE has stepped up to the plate by committing \$350,000 to fund the expansion of Thriving Minds into South Dallas, beginning with the delivery of free, comprehensive academic, enrichment and other support services to children and their families through the Thriving Minds After-School program at Charles Rice Learning Center. Since launching in November 2009, the after-school program has worked to fill learning gaps by bringing more of the neighborhood’s resources and support to after-school participants.

“Chase is proud to be a part of creating a citywide commitment to a better community,” said Anne Motsenbocker, President of JPMorgan Chase in Dallas. “All children deserve the opportunity to be successful in and out of school. It will take the efforts of our parents, educators, civic and business

leaders to keep the momentum moving forward with Thriving Minds, to expand partnership efforts and to grow opportunities for our children."

A variety of South Dallas organizations have also stepped up to support the work of Thriving Minds, including the Park South YMCA, which is hosting weekly after-school fitness activities, and the South Dallas Cultural Center is coordinating arts and cultural programs from South Dallas artists and providers.

In addition other community organizations are supporting Thriving Minds. Student groups from Southern Methodist University are facilitating activities which will culminate in campus visits and family participation nights. Beginning in February, the North Texas Food Bank will open a new Kids Café site on campus to serve nutritious meals to children and their families.

Visit bigthought.org/thrivingminds to learn more about Thriving Minds and the work of Big Thought.

ABOUT BIG THOUGHT

Driven by its mission—to make imagination a part of everyday learning—Big Thought has grown beyond arts education to become one of the nation's leading nonprofits focused on building partnerships that allow all children access to quality learning opportunities. The organization was founded in 1987 by Edith O'Donnell and Mitch Jericho, who shared a strong belief in the power of the arts to help children learn creatively. A track record of effective programs led to steady growth and strong partnerships with the Dallas Independent School District, the City of Dallas and more than 100 community organizations and cultural institutions. Today nationally recognized, Big Thought is measuring the power of the community to impact learning and sharing what we've learned in our commitment to serve the entire child. Visit bigthought.org to learn more.

ABOUT THE WALLACE FOUNDATION

The Wallace Foundation is an independent, national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people. Its three current objectives are: strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement; improving out-of-school learning opportunities; and building appreciation and demand for the arts. More information and research on these and other related topics can be found at The Wallace Foundation Knowledge Center at wallacefoundation.org.

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