



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Margaux Bergen
703-683-7807
Margaux.Bergen@uwa.unitedway.org

THE JCPENNEY AFTERSCHOOL FUND AND UNITED WAY AWARD \$1.7M GRANT TO CHILDREN IN NEED

-- Grant Dedicated to Providing Youth with Access to Afterschool Programs --

Alexandria, VA [October 23, 2007] – United Way is providing more children than ever before with access to quality afterschool programs with the help of a grant from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, a charitable organization committed to providing children in need with access to life-enriching afterschool programs that foster their academic, physical and social development. The grant, which totals **\$1.7 million**, will be used to provide financial assistance to 3,949 kindergarten through twelfth grade students who are financially unable to participate in an afterschool program as well as those who currently participate in a program but are at risk of leaving due to lack of funds. J. C. Penney Company, Inc., a United Way National Corporate Leader, also provided United Way with a \$50 gift card for every student in the program – another **\$197,450** in gifts.

“JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund continue to demonstrate their commitment to communities by providing children in need with access to essential afterschool programs through their partnership with United Way,” said Brian Gallagher, president and CEO of United Way of America. “By investing in measurable, proven strategies that provide young people with a safe environment to learn, play and grow, JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund share our belief that larger community success starts with children.”

The 2007-2008 grant for 17 local communities is a 170% increase over the \$1 million the JCPenney Afterschool Fund invested last year in 10 local United Ways to provide scholarships for 3,150 students. JCPenney also provided gift cards so these disadvantaged children could come to school ready to succeed with new clothing, shoes, underwear and socks. Since 1999, JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund have contributed **over \$60 million to support** afterschool programs nationwide, reaching more than 15,000 children in 2006 alone.

Each participating local United Way received \$94,000 for the program which is matched with another \$94,000 locally to provide grants for a minimum of 94 young people whose families lacked the financial resources to participate in a full-time afterschool program.

Because of the success of the program and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund’s commitment to building stronger communities and helping youth succeed, the JCPenney Afterschool Fund expanded the program in 2007-2008 to include 17 local United Ways:

- Heart of America United Way (Kansas City)

- United Way of the Columbia-Willamette (Portland, Oregon)
- United Way of Miami-Dade (Florida)
- United Way of Metro Dallas
- Mile High United Way (Denver)
- United Way of Metro Chicago
- United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)
- United Way of Greater Houston
- United Way of New York City
- United Way of the Greater New Orleans Area
- United Way for Southeastern Michigan (Detroit)
- United Way of El Paso County
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles
- United Way of the Bay Area
- Valley of the Sun United Way (Phoenix)
- United Way of Central Maryland (Baltimore)
- United Way of Central Oklahoma (Oklahoma City)

Examples of the program’s success for the 2006-2007 school year include:

United Way of Columbia Willamette

JCPenney associates came to work early to greet special Saturday shoppers: 61 of the 94 local recipients of JCPenney Afterschool Fund grants – underserved middle school students who could not otherwise afford to participate in quality afterschool programs, let alone spend money on school clothes. “I really appreciate it because kids who aren’t in a good place right now and don’t have that much stuff now actually have good clothes. For some of us, it was our first time shopping at an actual department store,” said one parent. One girl was overheard saying, **“This is the best day of my life!”** which was mirrored in the smiles on the children’s faces and the excitement in the air. Some of the students also received free back-to-school haircuts at the JCPenney salon.



United Way of Columbia-Willamette (Expresiones – Centro de Jovenes)

In the fall, CAFÉ and Expresiones partnered with the JCPenney stores to provide a unique shopping event for 58 youth in the program. Many families did not have their own transportation, so the Clackamas JCPenney store paid for bus transportation and provided a free continental breakfast for all youth and adult participants. Twenty-five JCPenney associates, some of whom spoke Spanish, volunteered to help with the event and shopping. <http://www.unitedway-pdx.org/yourCommunity/successStories.htm>

Valley of the Sun United Way (Outreach Services Program)

JCPenney hosted an annual back-to-school shopping event in August, featuring 100 financially disadvantaged youths who were paired with a volunteer shopper. Each child received a \$100 gift certificate and haircut. JCPenney opened the store early and each child received 20% off their entire purchase. Many of these children would normally have gone without new clothing, shoes, underwear and socks.



what matters.®

United Way of Miami-Dade (Achievement Matters, Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc.)

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund grant was used to raise achievement levels of minority youth in Miami-Dade County. Through an Achievement Matters program, which provides individual instruction in reading comprehension, math, writing and more, African-American and minority youths ages 12-18 gained the study habits and test-taking skills they needed in order to increase their scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and PSAT/SAT. Results included 87% of participating students improving their academic letter grade by the end of the school year, 88% of participating students passing the FCAT and 97% increasing their PSAT/SAT scores by 200 points.

<http://www.unitedwaymiami.org/newsdetails.asp?newsid=174>

After spending his JCPenney gift card, Fred Clarke, Jr., one of the scholarship awardees, said: “I did not have to ask my dad for anything, and we got to ride in a charter bus. The people in the store were asking us if we were special kids because we had certificates from JCPenney’s with a special picture. I told them that I got the gift certificate because I was an Achievement Matters kid and I had good grades.”

United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (Kids Club, Camp Fire USA)

After participating in the program, 97% of youth feel safer in Camp Fire USA than in their previous alternative afterschool program; 96% of parents report their children are safer in the program, and 100% of apartment managers/owners reported their communities are safer and more stable during the afterschool hours.

United Way of Greater Los Angeles (Youth Recreation Center, New Horizons Family Center)

New Horizons served 21 children in an afterschool program and reported 80% improved in at least two Reading/Language Arts content areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), based on their report cards (progress reports) and/or IEP reports after six months. At the back-to-school event one participant noted, “The employees were wonderful and helped the kids to the right area of the store and cleaned up after the kids tore through their merchandise! JCPenney provided muffins and juice for the kids when they were done shopping.”

<http://www.unitedwayla.org/getinformed/news/Pages/jcpenny.aspx>

About United Way

United Way is a national network of more than 1,300 locally governed organizations that work to create lasting positive changes in communities and people’s lives. Building on more than a century of service as the nation’s preeminent community-based fundraiser, United Way engages the community to identify the underlying causes of the most significant local issues, develops strategies and pulls together financial and human resources to address them, and measures the results. United Way of America is the national organization dedicated to leading the United Way movement. While local United Ways tackle issues based on local needs, common focus areas include helping children and youth succeed, improving access to health care, promoting financial stability, and strengthening families. For more information about United Way, please visit:

www.unitedway.org.

About the JCPenney Afterschool Fund

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a charitable organization committed to providing children in need with access to life-enriching afterschool programs that foster their academic, physical and social development. Currently, more than 14 million youth in America are unsupervised every day between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Through partnerships with the YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H and United Way of America, the JCPenney Afterschool Fund helps prepare children to reach their full potential by providing them with essential afterschool opportunities.

###