

Contact: Kevin Kane
1-800-914-NEWS (6397)

For Immediate Release

CareFirst Gives \$20,000 to Boost ‘Healthy’ Reading by Title 1 District School Children

-- Everybody Wins! to Launch ‘Health Month’ of Reading in May 2009 --

Washington, D.C. (March 11, 2009) — CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield ([CareFirst](#)) has given Everybody Wins! DC ([EWIDC](#)) \$20,000 to help promote reading and healthy living among the District’s Title 1 elementary school students, as part of the community literacy organization’s ‘Health Month’ of reading this May. More than 1,000 D.C. students will be reached in 14 schools. Health education books will be prominently displayed during in-school program activities, and CareFirst’s contribution will allow each child to receive one free book.

“More than 4 million elementary school-age children in the U.S. suffer from obesity,” said Maria Harris Tildon, CareFirst Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Community Affairs. “Healthy behaviors learned today can help reverse this alarming trend and prevent chronic, debilitating diseases in adulthood.”

Obesity is a leading cause of cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes. In the U.S., cardiovascular disease is the number killer of adults, accounting for more than 650,000 deaths per year. Diabetes ranks 6th, causing more than 75,000 deaths ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)).

Mary Salander, Founder and Executive Director of Everybody Wins! DC, said of the May 2009 healthy literacy campaign, “Programs such as Health Month enhance our students’ self-esteem, expand their possibilities for success in school and in life, and help fortify a solid foundation in learning for years to come.”

Everybody Wins! DC is a non-profit organization that works exclusively with students in the District’s regional Title 1 schools and is the largest children’s literacy organization in the DC-metro area, serving nearly 30,000 students.

Title 1 is federal legislation that provides special funding to school district’s with the highest concentrations of poverty to ensure that [no child is left behind](#) in having a “fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education.”

(more)

('Health Month' Release - Continued...)

Sample list of books: *All about Staying Healthy; The Healthy Body Cookbook: Over 50 Fun Activities and Delicious Recipes for Kids; Be Healthy! It's a Girl Thing: Food, Fitness, and Feeling Great; Oh the Things You Can Do That Are Good for You!; Yoga Games for Children: Fun and Fitness with Postures, Movements, and Breath.*

In its 72nd year of service, CareFirst, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is a not-for-profit health care organization which, through its affiliates and subsidiaries, offers a comprehensive portfolio of health insurance products and administrative services to nearly 3.4 million individuals and groups in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. Through its CareFirst Commitment initiative and other public mission activities, CareFirst supports efforts to increase the accessibility, affordability, safety and quality of health care throughout its market areas.

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