

**CONTACT:**

Joe Balaban  
(412) 768-5095  
(412) 445-4024 (cell)  
joseph.balaban@pnc.com

**PNC GROW UP GREAT COLLABORATES WITH 14 SCIENCE CENTERS  
TO BOOST SCIENCE SKILLS OF PRE-SCHOOLERS**

*- PNC Foundation Invests in Teacher Training, Activities and Support  
of Mobile Planetarium Show that Takes Children to the Moon -*

PITTSBURGH, April 21, 2009 – Preschool children from seven states and the District of Columbia will have more opportunities to learn science basics and experience related activities that are educational and fun through grants announced today by the PNC Foundation to 14 regional science centers and non-profit organizations. In addition, a new *Sesame Street* planetarium show, with major funding from PNC, will help more children to learn about the sky above and the world around them.

The new investments in school readiness by the PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (NYSE: PNC), were announced today as PNC Grow Up Great, the 10-year, \$100 million investment in early childhood education, celebrates its fifth anniversary.

"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," said PNC Chairman and Chief Executive Officer James E. Rohr.

**Getting Started with Science**

*Grow Up Great with Science*, PNC's new initiative with regional science centers and related non-profit organizations, will help foster a foundation in science for preschoolers. It comes at a time when many educators have sought increased emphasis on the discipline. A study by the National Research Council recognized that providing young children with research-based mathematics and science learning is likely to pay off with increased achievement, literacy and work skills.

The PNC Foundation has pledged up to \$6 million in three-year grants along with an independent evaluation of the program's success. The second- and third-year funding is contingent on the centers' successful completion of the prior year's project goals.

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The regional science centers and non-profit organizations will use the funding to partner with early educators for professional development of local pre-school teachers and introduce families of pre-school children to science through free visits to the centers' interactive exhibits. In addition, experts from the centers will travel to classrooms to help teachers create activities for the children to explore science with their senses and use simple tools to test their ideas. PNC employees will serve as volunteers during many of these activities.

### **Coming Soon: Kids Join Elmo on the Moon**

In coming weeks, children can also enjoy *One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure*, a multi-cultural planetarium show that began airing at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Today's event included Rohr, Sesame Workshop President and Chief Executive Officer Gary E. Knell and Elmo, Muppet from *Sesame Street*.

"One World, One Sky" was created by Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*; the Adler Planetarium in Chicago; the Beijing Planetarium and the Liberty Science Center (Jersey City, NJ) with major funding from the National Science Foundation and the PNC 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. ([www.sesameworkshop.org/sky](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/sky).)

The show follows Elmo, Big Bird and Hu Hu Zhu – a Muppet from the Chinese co-production of *Sesame Street*. It provides young children with an age-appropriate introduction to astronomy as they learn basic concepts in math, geometry and physics.

"One World, One Sky is a unique show for children and families to experience the fun of astronomy and the common bonds we share, with the help of their friends from our Sesame Street family in the U.S. and China," Knell said. "Thanks to PNC, we are excited that visitors to the National Air and Space Museum will have the opportunity to take part in the adventure and hopefully spark their interest in learning more about the universe and each other."

The show can also be seen in an inflatable dome that travels to area childcare centers. At the *Growing Up Together Under One Big Sky* mobile planetarium, each child who attends will receive a day time/night time activity poster, which is trilingual (English, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish) and has reusable, glow-in-the dark stars to display at home. These are also available for free during the month of April in all PNC Bank branches.

### **Grow Up Great: Celebrating Five Years of School Readiness**

Since its 2004 launch, *PNC Grow Up Great* has contributed more than \$17 million in grants to enhance preschool programs, 102,000 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 across eight states and the District of Columbia. 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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