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NEWS RELEASE

Date: March 23, 2005
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Director of Communications

McMichael Head Start Students Donate "Hearts for Children"
Proceeds to Help Tsunami Victims

Pre-Schoolers Turn Over \$100.00, Mostly in Quarters, to D.A. Lynne Abraham's Urban Genesis Foundation to Give to Tsunami Children

WHEN--- WEDNESDAY MARCH 23, 2005 9:30am

WHERE—Morton McMichael Elementary School
3547 Fairmount Ave (36th and Fairmount)
Teacher Judy McDowell's Classroom 104

March 23, 2005---Fifty pre-school children from the five classes of the Head Start program at Morton McMichael Elementary School will present a Mason jar of relief money to D.A. Lynne Abraham's Urban Genesis Foundation to be donated to the victims of the Tsunami.

The children, ages three, four and five, said they wanted to do something to help those less fortunate.

When the children were asked to think of ways that we could all help the children involved in this tragedy, the children wanted to give things to them. They wanted to send food, toys, books, and clothes. The teachers explained that it would be difficult to do, but they could send money, and the people taking care of these children would use the money to buy them the things that they needed. It was decided that the children would make something to sell to people to raise money that could be sent. Because Valentine's Day was so near, it was decided that the children would make refrigerator magnets using craft foam hearts.

All the children made many heart magnets and then sold them for 50 cents (2 quarters a magnet). Parents, McMichael staff and children from the other grades bought heart

magnets. Some parents sold heart magnets at their work places. The McMichael Head Start collected over \$100 from the sale.

The goals of the Hearts for Children Activity are to introduce the children to a world perspective, build confidence in their abilities to make a difference, and begin to develop an understanding of how people can work together to accomplish a goal. They also will begin to develop an understanding of where they live in relation to other places in the world.

At the end of January and the beginning of February the children were carefully introduced to some of the basic facts about the Tsunami tragedy in Southeast Asia. They were told that it was a flood that destroyed houses, schools and stores. Each teacher focused on the facts that he or she felt the children could understand without being frightened or overwhelmed. They avoided discussion about the many deaths and concentrated on the loss of basic needs. They also talked about how many people from around the world were helping. At the same time, using the globe, the classes located where they live, where the tragedy took place and how far away it was.

At the same time the teachers were reading *A Chair for My Mother*, by Vera B. Williams. In the story, the family loses everything they own in a fire. Friends and family help to get them set up again, but they don't have an easy chair. The family saved all the mother's tips from work in a glass jar to buy a comfortable chair. The children easily made the connection between the family's tragedy and the tragedy facing the children in Southeast Asia. They decided to save our money in a glass jar.

Each class has counted the money in the jar and then passed the jar to each child to hold at circle time. As each child held the jar, they said what they would like the money to buy for the children of the flood. The teachers have written down the children's responses.

When the school asked the D.A. if she would handle the transfer through her foundation, she immediately agreed.

“These children exemplify the importance of giving to those less fortunate and of being a good citizen of the world, said District Attorney Lynne Abraham. “I am honored to help them accomplish their goal of helping other people in need.”

Participants:

Five classes of Head Start Students, ages 3, 4, and 5

Miss Briana Dunn, Dean of Students of Morton McMichael Elementary School

David Silberman, Assistant Director of Philadelphia School District Head Start

Cheryl Fox, Head Start

Teachers: Judy McDowell, Penny Allison, Mary McVey, Joan Shames, Marie Moffa