



**The Public Education Foundation**  
*Because young minds matter*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **The Public Education Foundation's We R Community Initiative Turns Teens into Philanthropists**

*We R Community provides students with grant money and the power  
to decide which nonprofits to fund*

**LAS VEGAS** (September 17, 2009) – Launched in 2008, The Public Education Foundation's We R Community service-learning initiative kicks off its second year of teaching high school students about the world of philanthropy by transforming them into donors. The Foundation is holding its annual We R Community workshop for teachers, students and sponsors on **Wednesday, September 23 from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.** at NV Energy's main office. The media is invited to attend.

The service-learning and volunteerism program shows teens how they can make a positive difference in their community by connecting them to the real world. We R Community introduces teens to the importance of leadership, service, philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. Students extend their classroom learning by operating much like a mini-foundation.

During the year-long program, they create a mission statement, research nonprofit organizations, review grant applications, fund grants and generally incorporate this program into classroom learning and their daily lives. Each participating class is provided with \$5,000 and is given the power to decide which nonprofits to fund with the money.

"We R Community empowers students and provides them with valuable real world experience by taking them through the grant-making process from start to finish," said Judi Steele, president of The Public Education Foundation. "Teens learn about our community as they identify and address the critical community needs that matter most to them. Even in these difficult economic times, community support has been strong and continues to build. We have more than doubled the number of schools from four schools during our pilot period last year to nine schools this year."

The following nine high schools are participating in the We R Community program during the 2009-10 school year: Basic, Cimarron, Desert Oasis, Green Valley, Las Vegas, Mojave, Northwest Career and Technical Academy, Sierra Vista and Valley.

Students learn the business of philanthropy and become focused decision makers. After reviewing proposals from nonprofits, students select the recipients and host a grant award celebration where checks are given to the selected organizations at the end of the school year. As part of the program, students must also volunteer two to four hours each month with a nonprofit organization. We R Community allows teens to experience all sides of community service.

(more)



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*We R Community/2*

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Last year, the four participating high schools awarded grants worth a total of \$20,000 to several local nonprofit organizations and in-school clubs, including Three Square, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, St. Jude's Ranch for Children, The Rape Crisis Center, Street Teens, Olive Crest, HopeLink, Boys Town Nevada, Basic High's Best Co./Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Palo Verde's FBLA and DECA club, Valley High's Project Hope and Green Valley High's drug education program.

The \$5,000 grant money comes from generous community and corporate sponsors and is to be used for programs that inspire change and encourage potential in education, the promotion of healthy families, access to the arts or environmental enhancement. This year's class sponsors are USAA Savings Bank, The Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, The Stern Family Foundation, The DeVore Family Fund, UnitedHealthcare, State Farm and NV Energy.

"Many teens know little about non-profits, said Susan Stern of the Stern Family Foundation. "They may have received services from non-profits or know others who have. We R Community gives them the opportunity to give to their community. As a funder, this is the best feeling of all."

**WHAT:** We R Community Kick-Off Workshop

**WHEN:** Wednesday, September 23, 2009  
7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** NV Energy  
6226 W. Sahara Avenue

### **EDITOR'S NOTE: THE WORKSHOP IS OPEN TO THE MEDIA.**

#### **About The Public Education Foundation**

The Public Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to mobilizing community and global resources to meet the challenges of educating a growing and diverse Southern Nevada population. The Foundation's programs and initiatives are designed to improve student performance and advance quality educational opportunities for all children. Since 1991, the Foundation has raised approximately \$60 million to improve teaching and learning in Southern Nevada's public schools. For more information about the Foundation, go to [www.ThePEF.org](http://www.ThePEF.org).

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