



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2008

CONTACT: Elizabeth Hirst
Volunteer USA Foundation
850.562.5300

**JEB BUSH, JR. AND VOLUNTEER USA FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE
FAMILY LITERACY SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN**

~Unique scholarships awarded at Palm Beach Family Literacy Day Celebration~

Palm Beach Gardens – Scholarships awarded simultaneously to parents and their children were announced today during a National Family Literacy Day Celebration in Palm Beach Gardens. Made possible by support from Dollar General and the Florida Prepaid College Foundation, Volunteer USA's Family Literacy program is providing scholarships to parents who are outstanding students at family literacy academies and their young children. The awards were presented to celebrate the achievement of a select group of students during an annual luncheon celebrating the accomplishments of parents involved in family literacy programs throughout South Florida.

"I congratulate all of our scholarship winners who have worked so incredibly hard because they recognize the power of literacy," said Jeb Bush, Jr., supporter of the Family Literacy program. "I come from a long list of family members who firmly believe that by teaching adults and children to read we will open the doors to hope, prosperity and the realization of dreams."

The adult scholarship winners were selected based on their academic gains, attendance, GED exam status, a personal essay and reference letters. The winners include:

- Maria T. Alvarez, FLASH at Finlay Academy, Miami, and her 6-year old daughter.
- Carolina Balaguera, Hispanic Unity of Florida's Family Literacy Academy, Hollywood, and her 3-year old son.
- Adileny Gomez, Lakeland Teen Parent Program, and her 2-year old son.
- Patricia Hawthorne, Lake Wales Family Literacy Academy, and her 6-year old son.
- Roccio Lopez, Calhoun County Family Literacy, Blountstown, and his 2-year old daughter.
- Diana Molina, The Alliance for Families with Deaf Children, Ft. Lauderdale, and her 3-year old daughter.
- Genaro Ramirez,* Lake Wales Family Literacy Academy, Lake Wales, with 7-year old and 4-year old sons, plus 2-year old and 7-month-old daughters. (Ramirez was announced as the program's first scholarship winner in February 2008.)

"We believe these family-friendly scholarships are an incredible incentive that breaks the cycle of illiteracy once and for all. We believe that parents who are determined to earn a post-secondary degree not only are working hard for their own success today, but will have the highest aspirations for their children," said Liza McFadden, president of Volunteer USA. "In all, seven adults and ten children are receiving scholarships this year to pursue a community college degree or career and technical education in Florida."

CONTINUED

Dollar General is the key financial supporter of the Family Literacy Scholarship program in its inaugural year. The discount retailer's grant creates scholarships for adult literacy students who want to continue their education at a Florida community college or career and technical school.

"The efforts put forth by these parent-students are commendable. They have overcome challenges to achieve a better education and are encouraging their children to strive for excellence through education," said Rick Dreiling, Dollar General's CEO. "Dollar General has been a champion for family literacy for many years, and we are excited to fund this scholarship program that promotes literacy and lifelong learning among families."

In addition, the Florida Prepaid College Foundation contributed nearly \$22,000 toward community college scholarships for children of the winning adult literacy students.

"Learning tends to be contagious in families. When children see their parents pursue higher education, they are likely to copy that behavior," said Pamela Stephany of the Florida Prepaid College Board. "Returning to a classroom setting can be a daunting prospect, and we commend each scholarship recipient. They are setting the bar higher for themselves, and serving as wonderful role models for their children."

Volunteer USA also announced the newest corporate partner in the Family Literacy Scholarship Program, the Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges (FAPSC). FAPSC will provide at least twelve scholarships, valued at approximately \$240,000, to winning adult literacy students for the 2010 school year.

Also recognized today was Darlene Kostrub, an advisory board member of the Florida Family Literacy Initiative and the executive director of the Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition. She was presented a certificate of appreciation for her dedication to promoting literacy and ensuring every child and every adult in Palm Beach County becomes a reader.

Background:

The **Florida Family Literacy Initiative** is administered by the Volunteer USA Foundation, which provides funding, training and technical assistance for literacy providers. The Foundation assists 12 Family Literacy Academies in Florida. If you are interested in funding a scholarship for a child or an adult, please see www.volunteerusafoundation.org for more information or email us at liza.mcfadden@volunteerusafund.org.

Dollar General is a leading discount retailer with more than 8,300 neighborhood stores. Dollar General stores provide convenience and value to customers by offering consumable basic items such as food, snacks, health and beauty aids and cleaning supplies, as well as basic apparel, housewares and seasonal items at everyday low prices. The company has a longstanding tradition of supporting literacy and education. Since its inception in 1993, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has awarded more than \$24.5 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 1 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy, a general education diploma or English proficiency. To learn more about Dollar General, visit www.dollargeneral.com.

The **Florida Prepaid College Foundation**, the non-profit direct support organization of the Florida Prepaid College Board, has awarded more than 27,100 scholarships to children throughout Florida since 1990. www.floridaprepaidcollegefoundation.com

The **Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges (FAPSC)** provides leadership, support and advocacy for quality career education. FAPSC represents the interests of over 800 licensed, private career colleges and schools that annually prepare more than 265,000 students in 200 occupations. www.FAPSC.org

###