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James DeBord, YorkCounts: 650-1500 office / (717) 475-6785 cell / jdebord@ycp.edu

Dan Fink, YorkCounts: 650-1460 office / (717) 818-4072 cell / dfink1@ycp.edu

Patricia Azriel, York County Community Foundation: 848.3733 office / pazriel@yccf.org

Community Foundation, Women's Giving Circle, award grants for IB charter school effort

York, June 10, 2009 – York County Community Foundation and the Women's Giving Circle, a program of the Community Foundation, awarded \$60,000 and \$15,000 in grants respectively to YorkCounts for its effort to create a new K-12 regional charter school in York. Once approved by State Department of Education, the new school will offer an International Baccalaureate curriculum, and it will be the only K-12 IB school in Central Pennsylvania.

YorkCounts Director James DeBord accepted the grants on behalf of Dennis Baughman and Sue Krebs, volunteers who have guided YorkCounts' Metro-York Educational Opportunities Subcommittee since it formed in January 2008.

The money will allow the regional charter school effort to move to its next stage. The Educational Opportunities group hired Mark Morford, an attorney with Mechanicsburg-based Latsha Davis Yohe and McKenna, and will hire a consultant to write the charter school application in accordance with state requirements. The group has also started looking in York at possible sites for the school.

The regional IB charter school concept emerged in response to a 2007 Metro-York recommendation that called for attacking the root problem in the York City School District: the concentration of poverty in the city. In his 2002 visit to York, David Rusk made establishing a charter/magnet school one of his key recommendations. The IB school, which is to be made up of a 51 percent-49 percent mix of city and county students, would create a new public school opportunity for parents and students throughout York County.

One of the goals of an International Baccalaureate program is to “encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.” Read the full IB mission and learn more at www.ibo.org.

“We think having a mix of students from lower-income families and middle-class families will be beneficial to both,” Krebs said. “Offering a world-class IB education will help keep a critical mass of middle-class families in the city, which is an absolutely essential part of any long-term economic development strategy for York and the surrounding municipalities.”

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“The Community Foundation’s grant for the IB Charter School reflects the new role that community foundations are taking on nationwide,” said Bob Newcomer, interim president of the Foundation. “We want to be innovators in our community if we hope to see any substantive change toward improving the lives of our residents.”

Newcomer said the Distribution Committee at the Community Foundation spent a full year researching the issue to ensure that this grant would be in alignment with the Community Foundation’s strategic plan.

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Founded in 1961, York County Community Foundation is committed to preserving and enriching the quality of life in York County. Through leadership in advancing, encouraging, and celebrating philanthropy for the public good, we strengthen our community, now and for generations to come. York County Community Foundation granted \$4.3 million in 2008.

YorkCounts is a community-based coalition working to assess, sustain and enhance York County's quality of life – building alliances, introducing partners, spotlighting issues and facilitating conversations on education, economic development, health and safety and diversity. Partners include Better York, the United Way of York County, WellSpan Health, York College of Pennsylvania, the York County Chamber of Commerce, the York County Commissioners, the York County Community Foundation and the York County Economic Development Corp. Learn more at yorkcounts.org.
YorkCounts · 105 Leader Heights Road, Suite 2 · York, PA 17403 · phone 717/815-1460