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Immediate Release

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Community Leaders Donate Learning Supplies to Urban Youth *Donations made in honor of National Summer Learning Day*

PROVIDENCE, R.I., JUNE 22, 2010 -- A caravan of brightly decorated cars and trucks, carrying children's learning materials destined for summer programs in communities around the state, pulled out of the United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) parking lot on Monday, June 21. The procession was in celebration of National Summer Learning Day, which is an opportunity to remind everyone how important it is that children learn during the summer.

UWRI, in partnership with the Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance (RIASPA), sponsored the event that brought together community leaders and UWRI's Young Leaders Circle to drop off more than 4,000 learning supplies and local officials to speak about the benefits of summer learning for Rhode Island's children and youth. (A list of corporate donors can be found on Page 4.) In attendance were: UWRI President and CEO Anthony Maione; Nellie Mae Foundation Vice President of Programs Mary Sylvia Harrison; State Representative Edwin Pacheco; State Senator Frank DeVall; and RIASPA representatives.

"We believe in the power of partnerships. As a result, we work collaboratively with a diverse range of community-based partners to improve the lives of people in need," said Anthony Maione, president & CEO, United Way of Rhode Island. "We're proud to work with the Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, among many others, to help ensure summer learning students are given the opportunities and resources to achieve success in school and in life."

National Summer Learning Day showcases summer programs across the country and highlights the importance of summer learning. During this national showcase, summer learning programs highlight how they work to maintain and advance children's academic and developmental growth, support working families, keep children safe and healthy, and send young people back to school ready to learn.

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RIASPA, with support from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, is funding five summer learning demonstration sites throughout Rhode Island in 2010. There are approximately 700 students who will participate in the five programs, which serve as innovative pilot programs for summer school and summer learning. The sites are run as partnerships between host school departments and one or more community organizations. Together, they plan and deliver content that offers engaging, hands-on activities to children and youth.

The five summer learning demonstration sites are run by: Boys and Girls Club of Pawtucket and Pawtucket School Department; SCOPE/Central Falls and Central Falls School Department; Pawtucket COZ and Pawtucket School Department; Providence After School Alliance and Providence School Department; and Connecting for Children and Families and Woonsocket School Department.

“The Joint Legislative Taskforce Report on Summer Learning, which was released today in conjunction with National Summer Learning Day, reflects that valuable summer programs, such as the ones we are supporting here today, bring significant benefits to children around the state. They assist dramatically in closing the widely acknowledged gap in learning during summer vacation,” said State Representative Edwin Pacheco who, along with State Senator Frank DeVall, co-chaired the Task Force.

To succeed in school and life, children and young adults need ongoing opportunities to learn and practice essential skills. However, for many children, both locally and nationally, when the schools close, they have little or no access to educational opportunities and helpful adult supervision.

“The Nellie Mae Education Foundation supports these summer learning programs because we view them as vital, core aspects of education. These programs build partnerships between communities and school systems, offer educational enrichment opportunities, and help nurture approaches and structures that take into account the ways young people actually learn,” said Nellie Mae Education Foundation Vice President of Programs Mary Sylvia Harrison.

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Research findings support the reality of summer learning losses when young people do not engage in educational activities. Research spanning 100 years shows that students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at summer's beginning. Additionally, most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills during summer. Low-income students also lose more than two months in reading achievement. More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college.

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About United Way of Rhode Island

United Way of Rhode Island has been working to improve the quality of life in Rhode Island communities for over 80 years. UWRI's mission is to mobilize the caring power of the community to improve the lives of people in need and address the issues Rhode Islanders care most about. United Way's goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. We believe that all Rhode Islanders deserve the opportunity to have a better life, as when any one of us succeeds, we all succeed. At United Way, we refer to this as advancing the common good. For more information, visit www.LIVEUNITEDri.org.

About RIASPA

RIASPA was established in 2002 by the United Way of Rhode Island, is a 600-member, statewide organization, promoting awareness and understanding of the benefits to students from high-quality, afterschool and summer programs. RIASPA is recognized as a leading, public policy advocate for the professional field of afterschool education, bridging policy and practice while serving as a liaison between schools, community organizations, funding sources, business leaders, government agencies and elected officials. One of 38 national, statewide, afterschool networks funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, RIASPA encourages and facilitates the creation of new afterschool programs and enhancements to existing ones, so that Rhode Island's youth are given greater opportunity to learn beyond school walls and lead productive lives.

About The Nellie Mae Education Foundation

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation is the largest charitable organization in New England that focuses exclusively on education. The Foundation supports the promotion and integration of student-centered approaches to learning at the middle and high school levels across New England. To elevate student-centered approaches, the Foundation utilizes a three-part strategy that focuses on: developing and enhancing models of practice; reshaping education policies; and increasing public understanding and demand for high quality educational experiences. The Foundation's new initiative areas are: District Level Systems Change; State Level Systems Change; Research and Development; and Public Understanding. Since 1998, the Foundation has distributed over \$110 million in grants. For more information, visit www.nmefdn.org.

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UWRI-RIASPA Summer Learning Materials Drive Donors List
As of June 17, 2010

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* Also provided volunteers for sorting supplies

** In partnership with United Way of Rhode Island, Shape Up RI donated 220 pedometers for Connecting Children and Families (Woonsocket, RI)