



Oct. 2, 2006

**Children's Investment Fund, United Way and Maybelle Clark Macdonald
Use \$1.1 Million to Help Low-Income Families with Childcare Services**

Portland's low-income families will benefit from a three-year grant totaling \$1.1 million providing childcare tuition assistance and other services at Peninsula Children's Center to help ensure a healthy start in life for some of the city's youngest and poorest residents.

Essentially, the funding allows Peninsula to provide services similar to an Early Head Start or Head Start. Unlike a Head Start program, Peninsula is an independent non-profit organization that strives to be a model for community-based childcare. This grant will expand services to all the families Peninsula serves throughout North and Northeast Portland, the majority of whom are low income.

The Children's Investment Fund Leverage Fund grant of \$500,000 was matched with an expected \$570,000 over three years from United Way of the Columbia-Willamette and \$50,000 from the Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund. The funding will help cover tuition costs for about 80 children at Peninsula annually for the next three years through June 2009.

A host of other services offered to children and their families include:

- Early childhood development specialists providing on-site and home-based parent education as well as referrals for additional services.
- Family advocacy assistance to help families obtain basic necessities such as housing, food, employment and support services for children.
- Pediatric nurse services meeting children's developmental needs.
- Hearing and speech specialists from the Hearing and Speech Institute to provide screenings as well as direct services.

Another component of the grant includes a partnership with Morrison Child and Family Services to offer childhood mental health services and parenting classes at Peninsula's main campus and its before- and after-school sites.

"All children deserve a quality early care and education experience. We are excited by this opportunity to work with our community partners to expand our services and identify and address challenges early, swiftly and on site to help our children and families succeed," said Peninsula Children's Center Executive Director Deborah Murray

Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, chair of the Children's Investment Fund Allocation Committee, said focusing resources on early childhood has tremendous payback in terms of increasing the likelihood of success later in life.

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“Research has shown that children who receive early education develop healthy physical, emotional and social traits that boost their odds when they enter school,” Saltzman said. “This is especially

important for children coming from low-income homes without easy access to education and health resources.”

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette CEO Brent Stewart said the organization believes in “supporting whole families,” which this grant provides.

“We know that Peninsula’s quality childcare, which includes assessment and parental education, will foster a child’s physical, social and emotional development,” he said.

The Children’s Investment Fund’s contribution to Peninsula is the sixth allocation from its Leverage Fund created in December 2004 to match public investments dollar for dollar with private funds. Thus far, \$2.5 million has been allocated from the Leverage Fund to maximize community impact and make more resources available to Portland’s children for a total investment of \$5.1 million.

About United Way of the Columbia-Willamette

United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has been a dedicated community partner for over 85 years, improving and changing lives in Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah and Washington counties. United Way is a team of individual and corporate investors, working with volunteers to give people hope and opportunity so they may live with dignity in times of need.

About Peninsula Children’s Center

Peninsula Children’s Center has been making a difference in the lives of children and families since 1970. The oldest and largest childcare and family center in North Portland, Peninsula provides quality, affordable services for low-income and working families. An independent non-profit organization certified by the Oregon Child Care Division, Peninsula has the capacity to serve 240 children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. It provides a full range of childcare services in five locations and is headquartered in a community-financed, state-of-the-art facility.

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About the Children’s Investment Fund

In 2002 Portland voters passed Measure 26-33 creating the Children’s Investment Fund. The Fund provides approximately \$10 million a year for five years to support 67 programs in early childhood development, after-school and mentoring and child abuse prevention and intervention. For more information, see www.childrensinvestmentfund.org

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