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Contact Barb Wolf, VP Marketing & Product Development ▪ 312-491-7888 ▪ bwolf@PLSemail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLS Plays Santa for 100 Students at Chicago's Calmecca Academy

CHICAGO, IL—December 13, 2011: “*Dear Santa: I would like a race car, a train and a blue sweater,*” wrote one five-year-old student. “*Can I please have purple gloves and a scarf, and for fun—coloring books?*” wrote another.

Each December, the young students at Calmecca Academy of Fine Arts & Dual Language on Chicago's South Side carefully write their letters to Santa Claus. This year, however, due to the slow economy, the school's expected support, which in the past was used to buy gifts for the children, was not available.

PLS Volunteers to Play Santa

That's when PLS stepped in, pledging to play Santa for the school's kindergarten and first grade classes. PLS team members at the company's Support Center headquarters and at its many Illinois stores made \$25 donations (the cost of purchasing gifts for one child), and the company matched many of the contributions.

On Monday, December 12, wrapped gifts for 100 students were delivered to Calmecca Academy by Sandra Arizaga, Director of Operations, PLS Check Cashers/North Illinois; Jim Bradley, Director of Operations, PLS Loan Store/South Illinois; and Daniel Dorame, Director of Operations, PLS Loan Store/North Illinois.

Delivering to Students in Dire Need

With average household incomes just under \$10,000, the students at Calmecca Academy of Fine Arts & Dual Language (www.calmeccaacademy.org), at 3456 W. 38th Street in Chicago, face daunting challenges all year round. Almost 97 percent come from low-income families, nearly 15 percent are special education students, and more than a third are limited-English learners.

“We are astounded at the generosity and kindness of our friends at PLS,” said Frances Garcia, Calmecca Academy's principal. “Thanks to their giving hearts, our young students will be able to



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enjoy a very merry Christmas, and will receive many of the basic necessities—gloves, scarves, boots—that they lack. PLS is an outstanding member of the community.”

“We’re just doing what good neighbors do, which is lending a hand to our neighbors in need,” said Bob Wolfberg, President, PLS. “On behalf of all the PLS team members who made gift donations, we’re very glad to help the students and staff at Calmecca Academy enjoy a happy holiday season.”

About PLS: People. Location. Service.

The PLS Group (www.PLSHome.com), headquartered in Chicago, is comprised of more than 300 financial services centers in Alabama, Arizona, California, Illinois, Indiana, Mississippi, New York, Texas and Wisconsin, with more than 3,100 employees. PLS is one of the largest, fastest-growing and most distinguished organizations in the check cashing industry, and is a top performer for Western Union, a money transfer network.

The PLS mission is to provide innovative and convenient financial services delivered with the respect that hard-working consumers deserve.

PLS has been listed among *Inc.* magazine’s “5000 Fastest-Growing Private Companies in America” (www.inc.com/inc5000/list) for the past three years, and for three consecutive years has been named one of the “101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work for in Chicago” by the National Association for Business Resources (www.101bestandbrightest.com). For the past four years, PLS has been named one of Chicago’s Largest Privately Held Companies by *Crain’s Chicago Business*[®] (www.chicagobusiness.com), and was listed among *Crain’s* “Fast 50” (Fastest Growing Companies). Bob and Dan Wolfberg, PLS Presidents, were finalists for Ernst & Young’s 2010 Entrepreneur of the Year Award (www.ey.com). In 2011, Bob Wolfberg was recognized by Financial Service Centers of America [FiSCA (www.fisca.org)] as its Financial Service Provider of the Year. The company has also been twice honored with the Activa Award from FiSCA in recognition of its charitable efforts.

The PLS Group serves customers through its **PLS Check Cashers** stores, which offer check cashing, prepaid Visa[®] debit cards, money transfer services, money orders and bill payments; **PLS Loan Store** locations, which provide consumer short-term loans, auto insurance and tax-preparation services; and **PLS Motor Vehicle Services** facilities, which offer vehicle license and registration services.

About Calmecca Academy of Fine Arts & Dual Language

Calmecca Academy, located at 3456 W. 38th Street in Chicago, offers classes to students from pre-kindergarten through middle school. The academy’s mission is to shape respectful, responsible lifelong learners who demonstrate attributes of inquisitive, self-motivated learners equipped with linguistic, cultural and artistic experiences that support and pave the way to success. For more information, visit www.calmeccaacademy.org

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