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Foundation announces antibullying education initiative proposal winners; will present checks and grant awards valued at more than \$35,000 at winning school assemblies

Pittsburgh, PA May 17, 2012—The Marcus L. Ruscitto Charitable Foundation, in alliance with the Pittsburgh Foundation and educational partners including the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association (PSCA), held a Bullying Prevention Conference on November 4, 2011, at California University of Pennsylvania (Cal U) which was attended by several hundred school counselors and teachers from the region.

At the conference, The Marcus L Ruscitto Foundation announced a request for proposal (RFP) for students, along with teacher and administrator approval, to develop creative approaches in support of antibullying education initiatives in southwestern Pennsylvania, including an informational video. The Foundation is pleased to announce the winning proposals accepted for funding at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The overall winning schools will each receive a cash prize or grants noted below to be used for antibullying education initiatives and the grand prize winner will be honored with the opportunity to bring the renowned anti-bullying initiative speaker, Dr. Adolph Brown, to their school for a one day presentation:

- Grand Prize Winner
Propel Homestead, Propel Charter Schools
Award: Grant for Dr. Adolph Brown to facilitate the “BULLYPROOFING YOUR SCHOOL” program in Fall 2012
- Overall School Winners
Elementary School – Hyde Elementary, Moon Township
Middle School – Highland Middle School, Blackhawk School District
High School – Belle Vernon Area High School, Belle Vernon Area School District
Award: \$2,000 cash prize to each school to support bullying prevention programs
- Creativity Awards
Penn Trafford Middle School, Penn Trafford School District
McCormick Elementary School, Moon Township
Award: \$500 cash prize to each school to support bullying prevention programs

Video screenings of the winning submissions and check award presentations will be held at school assemblies in the days leading up to the conclusion of the current school year. All of the winning videos can be viewed on the “You Can Stop Bullying” web site at <http://www.youcanstopbullying.org>.

Dr. Adolph Brown, a passionate educator and renowned inspirational speaker who has become a leader in developing innovative programs to tackle this critical issue was the keynote presenter at the Bullying Prevention Conference. He will conduct a full day antibullying program at **Propel Charter School** in

Homestead, sponsored by a grant from the Marcus L. Ruscitto Charitable Foundation in the Fall 2012-2013 school year.

“As the population most affected by it, we feel that students must play a key role in anti-bullying strategy development,” said Chris Sweeney, board member, Marcus L. Ruscitto Charitable Foundation. “We hope that access to these financial resources will galvanize peer students to take action and address this issue together with educators through the use of technology, new media and other unique approaches.”

“Bullying among children and adolescents has become almost epidemic and has been receiving increased attention over the past several years. It is an issue that everyone has seen, felt, or been directly affected by. School counselors are frontline educators who address the prevalence of bullying in the schools. The Ruscitto Foundation is to be commended for its focus on this critical issue and for providing professional development that addresses strategies and resources for reducing incidences of bullying and for helping those who have been victimized by bullies. Recent budget cuts in education have reduced both professional development opportunities and resources. Programs such as this are to be commended. In a much-needed time, this initiative will impact the youth of tomorrow with tools and resources for educators to stop bullying,” said Michelle Brand, President (2011-2012), Pennsylvania School Counselors Association (PSCA).

“The practice of bullying, particularly cyberbullying, has become a significant issue across our nation and has potentially devastating consequences for our children and their families. The Pittsburgh Foundation is pleased and excited to partner with the Ruscitto Foundation on such a critically important initiative,” commented Kevin Jenkins, Senior Program Officer and Director of Community Initiatives for the Pittsburgh Foundation.

About The Marcus L. Ruscitto Charitable Foundation

The Marcus L. Ruscitto Charitable Foundation was established as a legacy to an energetic young leader and visionary who devoted his time to helping people grow and pursue their dreams. The foundation invests in a broad range of educational, charitable, and research endeavors that reflect Marc’s own wide-ranging interests. For more information, please visit <http://www.marcusruscittofoundation.org> and <http://www.youcanstopbullying.org>.

About The Pittsburgh Foundation

Established in 1945, The Pittsburgh Foundation is one of the nation’s oldest community foundations and is the 14th largest of more than 750 community foundations across the United States. The foundation has strengthened its focus on community and the positive impact it strives to achieve through its grantmaking, the engagement of its donors in critical regional issues, and its activities around convening and leadership in collaboration with funding and civic partners. For more information, please visit <http://www.pittsburghfoundation.org>.

About The Pennsylvania School Counselors Association

The Pennsylvania School Counselors Association (PSCA) is a professional organization that represents school counseling in Pennsylvania. The mission of the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association is a to expand the image and influence of professional school counselors, to promote professional and ethical practice, and to advocate for equity and access for all students. The Pennsylvania School Counselors Association is the keystone that strengthens the image and influence of professional school counselors through advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and systemic change. PSCA empowers professional school counselors with the knowledge, skills, and resources to promote student success in the global community.

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Available for interviews: Chris Sweeney, the Marcus L. Ruscitto Charitable Foundation; John Ellis, the Pittsburgh Foundation; Michelle Brand, Pennsylvania School Counselors Association