



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2012

Contact: Maria Abraham
Families In Schools
Phone: (213) 201-3913
Email: mabraham@familiesinschools.org

20,000 Families Will Be Reached by New Summer Learning Initiative

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA – “We don’t need to tell you how important it is to learn to read and read to learn, but that is not just when school is open. It is over the summer, as well,” said Dr. John Deasy, LAUSD Superintendent, at Monday’s launch of Passport to Success, a new initiative that will address summer learning crisis by engaging 20,000 LAUSD families in summer learning activities. There was overwhelming excitement about the initiative, which is the first of its kind to address summer learning loss in Los Angeles and will increase families’ access to summer learning tools. The launch was also attended by representatives from the initiative’s sponsor, Target, media outlets, and Hoover Street Elementary School students and families, who received their Passport to Success kits during the kick-off.

The most moving moment of the event came during a speech by Mildred Medina, the mother of a student at Hoover Street Elementary School. She told the crowd how proud she is of her daughter and, referring to Passport to Success, said, “This is one more tool that is going to help me educate her so that we can keep learning, because now I am going to learn with her. It is our work; I am always looking around for activities that I can share with her and now the activities have arrived in my hands.” Said LAUSD Board President Mónica García, “In Los Angeles, 70% of our 3rd graders come from homes that can use support – low-income families where reading is challenged and where these kinds of programs make a big difference and really help change the culture of helping us learn every single day.” Added Target representative Martha Tashijan, “We know that if students can’t read at their grade level by end of third grade, their chances of succeeding drop off dramatically. So, reading proficiently by end of 3rd grade is one of the most significant milestones along the path of graduation.”

It is estimated that school summer breaks will cause the average student to lose up to one month of instruction, with disadvantaged students being disproportionately affected (Cooper, 1996). This is what researchers often refer to as the “summer slide.” When families participate in summer learning programs throughout their children’s educational experience, their children are more likely to increase their academic achievement. Passport to Success encourages families to participate in summer learning activities by providing families with a kit that includes a resource guide, family-friendly information about summer learning activities, and a family passport. During the summer, families will have their passports “stamped” at different learning events and programs, such as libraries, museums, and concerts, throughout Los Angeles. Families will be able to access additional resources online and will be able to sign up to receive summer learning tips through emails and text messages. Once students return to school in the Fall, they will submit their passports at their schools and will be eligible to win educational prizes that will continue to support student academic success. Participating schools will also honor students by providing them with certificates to recognize their achievement.

###

Passport to Success is an initiative of Families In Schools (FIS), a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles, California, whose mission is *to involve parents and communities in their children’s education to achieve lifelong success*. For more information about Families In Schools and Passport to Success, please visit www.familiesinschools.org.

Minneapolis-based Target Corporation (NYSE:TGT) serves guests at 1,762 stores in 49 states nationwide and at Target.com. In addition, the company operates a credit card segment that offers branded proprietary credit card products. Since 1946, Target has given 5 percent of its income through community grants and programs. Today, that giving equals more than \$3 million a week. For more information about Target’s commitment to corporate responsibility, visit Target.com/hereforgood.

