



**EDUCATIONAL
FIRST STEPS**

one childhood
ONE CHANCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Educational First Steps Welcomed Nearly 2000 guests to the 2008 Literacy Day at the Dallas Zoo
Special Guest, Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert presented EFS Affiliate Center Awards**

Dallas (November 17, 2008) - Educational First Steps (EFS) and its partners, the Dallas Zoo and the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) welcomed more than 2000 children and parents to the 2nd annual Literacy Day at the Dallas Zoo on November 9, 2008. Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert greeted guests, spoke to the value EFS brings to early childhood education and presented the EFS Teacher and Director of the Year awards.

The 2007 Literacy Day welcomed more than 450 children and parents in its first year, and this year more than exceeded EFS expectations with almost 4 times that number of guests. The event would not have been possible without the support from the Dallas Zoo, the NCFL and EFS sponsors and supporters like DART, Wells Fargo and Kaplan.

The event offered affiliate center families and guests the opportunity to sign up for library cards, the chance to be entertained by children's performer, Mister David, and a chance to be a part of the story with bottom of the sea interactive performances by children's authors, Robert Arista and Jan Peck. Gus, the EFS organizational spokesfrog, made special appearances throughout the day.

The event ended with Mayor Leppert's presentation of the David Munson 2007 Teacher of the Year award to Virginia Hughes of Open Door Preschool and 2 awards for Director of the Year to Adrianna Perry of Kidz College and Gwendolyn Brown Sneed of Good Street Baptist Church Child Care, Inc.

"We anticipated a great turnout based on last year's success, but we were overwhelmed by the fact that we more than quadrupled our attendance over last year," said Merriott J. Terry, Educational First Steps President and CEO. "This proves that our programs are working for our children and families, and it is so rewarding to see the families support those efforts by joining us for this exciting event."

About Educational First Steps

Founded in 1990, EFS has more than 18 years experience executing its mission to improve the quality and availability of early childhood education for economically disadvantaged children. By working with more than 69 childcare centers serving more than 4000 children, EFS programs prepare children from low-income families to "thrive instead of survive" when they enter schools. For more information about this event, contact Merriott Terry at 214-824-7940 or mterry@educationalfirststeps.org. To learn more about EFS, visit the organizational Web site at www.GetontheBuswithGus.org.

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