

Educational First Steps & Corporate Partners Give their Hearts to Disadvantaged Dallas Children

EFS to Sell Valentine T-shirts and Valentine Cards at Local Tom Thumb stores to fund Educational Programs.

Dallas (January 23, 2008) – Educational First Steps (EFS), American Airlines, the Dallas Mavericks, Fox 4 News, Tom Thumb and other EFS partners are giving their hearts this Valentine's Day in support of disadvantaged Dallas area children with the launch of the 2008 Hearts for Smarts Valentine Campaign. The campaign, which includes the sale of EFS Valentine Cards and T-shirts in Tom Thumb stores throughout Dallas and on the EFS Web site from now through February 14, 2008, is a whole-hearted effort by EFS to fund early childhood education programs for more than 2500 low income children ages birth to five.

"In our second year with Hearts for Smarts, we are thrilled with our efforts to inspire our community to "Get on the Bus with Gus" in support of early childhood education," says EFS Board Chairman, Barbara Garton. "Valentines and T-shirts sales continue to fuel the "Gus Bus" with funding for and awareness of our incredible and impactful programs in low income areas of Dallas. The amazing support of our partners this year has taken this promotion to a new level, and we are truly grateful." Garton refers to the support of major campaign sponsors American Airlines, Devin Harris and the Dallas Mavericks, news anchor Baron James and Promotions Director Joe Kozlowski with Fox 4 News, Tom Thumb stores, and supporting sponsors DART, EmbroidMe, IBM, InChorus Marketing & Promotion, and Minuteman Press in making the program possible by donating goods, services, air time, company participation and Mavericks Game promotion.

EFS Hearts for Smarts Campaign Highlights

Cards & T-shirts will be available for purchase at local Tom Thumb stores (look for the display) and at [HYPERLINK "http://www.GetontheBuswithGus.org" www.GetontheBuswithGus.org](http://www.GetontheBuswithGus.org) (click on Hearts for Smarts on the home page) through February 14, 2008.

American Airlines is hosting a dress down day at its headquarters for employees with proceeds going to EFS; cards and T-shirts will be on sale in the cafeteria.

An EFS valentine will be in every program at the Dallas Mavericks home game on February 8 with lucky winners receiving tickets on American Airlines.

Devin Harris of the Dallas Mavericks and Baron James of Fox 4 News have recorded a series of Public Service Announcements inviting the community to Get on the Bus with Gus and Hearts for Smarts.

About Educational First Steps:

Founded in 1990 by David Munson, 2008 winner of the T. Berry Brazelton Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award for his support of children, Sandra Estess, Joyce Wright & Linus Wright, EFS has more than 17 years experience executing its mission to improve the quality and availability of early childhood education for economically disadvantaged Dallas children. By working with more than 65 childcare centers serving more than 2,500 children, EFS programs prepare children from low-income families to "thrive instead of survive" when they enter schools. For more information on EFS, contact Merriott J. Terry at 214-824-7940 or visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.GetontheBuswithGus.org" www.GetontheBuswithGus.org](http://www.GetontheBuswithGus.org).