



## **Media Alert: Photo Opportunity**

### **Early Education Pays Off “Bill Gates Big” for Four Dayton Students**

Date: May 13, 2009  
For Release: **May 15, 2009**

Four local high school seniors have been notified that they are recipients of full college scholarships from Bill and Melinda Gates. The students are in the 2009 graduating class of Dayton Public Schools. Each one got a “Head Start” on their early childhood education through the area’s award winning, nonprofit Head Start provider, Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. The students have earned four of only 1,000 scholarships granted across the United States. They are India Brown (4.27 GPA) and Amber Sizemore (4.45 GPA) of Thurgood Marshall, Christina Martindale (4.3 GPA) of Stivers, and Charles Wilkes II (3.8 GPA) of the Dayton Early College Academy.

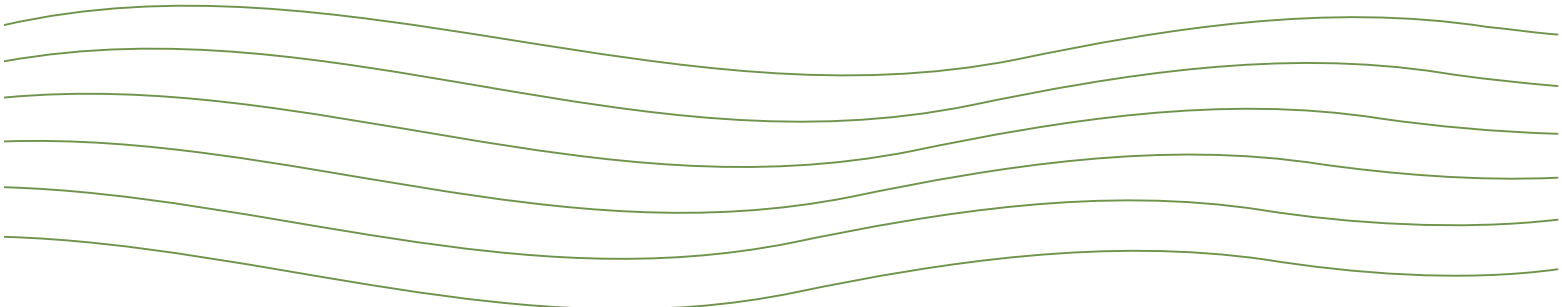
#### **A recognition ceremony/media event will be held:**

Friday, May 15, 2009  
11:40 a.m.  
Mandalay Banquet Center  
2700 East River Road  
Dayton, Ohio 45439

The announcement occurs at the same time the Gates Millennium Scholarship (GMS) program is celebrating its tenth anniversary. According to the GMS program, “the goal is to promote academic excellence and to provide an opportunity for outstanding minority students with significant financial need to reach their highest potential by:

- Reducing financial barriers for African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American and Hispanic American students with high academic and leadership promise who have significant financial need;

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- Increasing the representation of these target groups in the disciplines of computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health and the sciences, where these groups are severely underrepresented;
- Developing a diversified cadre of future leaders for America by facilitating successful completion of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees; and
- Providing seamless support from undergraduate through doctoral programs, for students selected as Gates Millennium Scholars entering target disciplines.”

“Every year 1.2 million students become a high school dropout statistic. All four of these youth achievements help to exemplify the positive role Head Start can play in a child’s life when paired with a strong academic and family infrastructure. These awards reinforce the entire reason our 380 employees come to work each day. We enjoy hearing of our success stories”, said Mary Burns, President and CEO of Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc.

As researched by the Source for Learning in 2009, Head Start:

- Raises the graduation rate from 66% to 91%
- Increases college enrollment from 13% to 38%
- Decreases convictions from 17% to 11%
- Lowers the welfare rate from 9% to 3%
- Reduces probation from 15% to 8%
- 8th grade students continue to be over a year ahead in reading, math, and science
- Produces an economic benefit of \$7 for every \$1 spent

**ABOUT Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc.**

Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. was incorporated in 1964 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. The agency began providing comprehensive Head Start services to low income children

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ages three to five years in 1965. Today, Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. is funded to serve 2,569 children ages 3-5 years and 102 children ages 0-3 in Clark, Madison, and Montgomery Counties, Ohio. Funding is provided through the US Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; and the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education.

While focusing on literacy and school readiness, Head Start is not solely a reading program for poor children. Head Start serves disadvantaged children ages zero to five years by preparing them for school. Each child is assessed at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the year. Results are regularly reviewed and tabulated to determine each child's progress and what is required to assist in their continued development.

A primary focus of this effort is an emphasis on helping families by teaching parenting skills and life skills. We work holistically with each child and family through a balanced approach of parent involvement, health, nutrition, social competency, literacy and numeracy development. This combination is what ensures that Head Start children will be ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. is successful because accountability is the backbone of our programs.

#### **ABOUT Head Start**

Created in 1965, Head Start is the most successful, longest-running, national school readiness program in the United States. It provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families. More than 22 million preschool aged children have benefited from Head Start.

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