

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Emily Mackell
PHONE: (215) 470-5216
Email: emackell@matchingmissions.com

Steppingstone Scholars engages influential supporters in conversation about pathways to educational success for Philadelphia schoolchildren

PHILADELPHIA, PA – Oct. 26, 2009 – More than 80 community and business leaders, philanthropists, educators and friends of Steppingstone Scholars, Inc. gathered at the Four Seasons Hotel on Thursday, October 22 for “Pathways to Educational Success,” a panel discussion about Steppingstone’s mission and the need for support to enable the organization to continue its critical work.

The dinner and program, hosted by the board of directors of Steppingstone Scholars and made possible in part by the generosity of the Four Seasons Hotel, is one of several events that Steppingstone Scholars holds annually to raise awareness and support for its work of developing and implementing programs that prepare underserved schoolchildren for educational opportunities that lead to college.

“Our goal as friends of Steppingstone Scholars is to give children in Philadelphia ‘a seat at the table’-- to give them access to opportunities that will change their future” said Steppingstone Scholars board chair Sen. Constance H. Williams.

Steppingstone Scholars announced that Lincoln Financial Group, one of the organization’s most committed supporters, and President and CEO Dennis R. Glass, will be honored at the organization’s annual Spring Salsa fundraiser to be held at the Please Touch Museum on April 30.

“Since 1999, the Lincoln Financial Foundation has contributed more than \$22 million to Philadelphia-area nonprofits, making an immense impact on the city of Philadelphia” said board member Gretchen Burke. “Lincoln was one of Steppingstone Scholars’ first supporters and its President and CEO, Dennis Glass, and his wife Deborah have remained dear friends of mine and of the organization.”

The evening’s panel moderator, Patricia D. Wellenbach, CEO of Sandcastle Strategy Group, began the conversation, “We are here tonight to discuss the role we can play in the future of our region, our country and our world by opening doors of opportunity to academically driven students.”

The success of the Steppingstone Scholars program was emphasized by each panelist, including Eddie Mensah, the director of the Scholars Program who said that 100% of the Scholars who have completed the Program have graduated from high school and matriculated to college.

Sara Shapiro Harberson, the dean of admission at Franklin & Marshall College, highlighted the college’s commitment to empower students, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Panelist Jasmine Pope, Steppingstone Scholars class of 2002 and Haverford College class of 2013 commented on how her life was impacted by her experience as a Scholar. “I am so grateful for the opportunity given to me by the program, I do not know where I would be if it weren’t for Steppingstone Scholars” said Pope. “I hope to continue to inspire children from my neighborhood to follow my path.”



Joseph Watkins, MSNBC political analyst and Steppingstone Scholars board member concluded the discussion with “Every one of us is our brother or sister’s keeper. We all have an obligation to help educate the children of Philadelphia and make our region more competitive.”

About Steppingstone Scholars, Inc.

Founded in 1999, Steppingstone Scholars, Inc. is dedicated to helping educationally underserved students in the Greater Philadelphia Region who have the potential and a community of support to achieve academic success. Students are prepared for admission to the best public, non-public and independent college preparatory schools through a program of academics, mentoring and support. Working with our partner schools, Steppingstone Scholars creates opportunities that lead to college.

Students are identified in the fourth grade, and go through a rigorous admissions process in order to be accepted into the Scholars Program. The Scholars Program comprises every phase of the Scholars' progression from admission in the fourth grade, academic preparation and placement, support services to college acceptance. Steppingstone serves 388 children, between the ages of 10 and 18, who participate in the academic and support services program.

Steppingstone Scholars, Inc. admits children of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to children at Steppingstone. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, placement opportunities, support services, scholarships and programs.

Steppingstone Scholars, Inc. is dependent upon corporate and private contributions in addition to individual, philanthropic gifts. For more information, visit www.steppingstonescholars.org or contact Kendra Wolfgang, Director of Development at 215-508-5150 or kwolfgang@steppingstonescholars.org.

###