



SLC School District



Office of the Mayor

## *Press Release*

*For Immediate Release*

Wednesday, February 11, 2004

### **Salt Lake City School District, YouthCity Join Forces for “Community of Caring” Initiative**

#### ***Mayor Anderson, Superintendent Withers Announce Two Partnerships Aimed at Helping Students and the Community***

SALT LAKE CITY—Today, Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson and Superintendent McKell Withers announced a “Community of Caring” initiative between the City’s YouthCity program and the Salt Lake City School District. The initiative will be modeled after the national Community of Caring character education program, with its five core values: caring, respect, responsibility, trust and family. The program aims to bring greater community involvement to helping children succeed both in and out of school.

The first cooperative effort under the initiative will be a senior citizen-student after-school mentoring program at Glendale Middle School. Students participating in Glendale’s after-school activities, which are offered in cooperation with YouthCity, will have the opportunity to be paired with area seniors from the Sunday Anderson Westside Senior Center. Young people will help seniors learn basic computer and Internet skills, and the seniors will build personal relationships with the students and help them with life skills and homework.

GE Corporate Payment Services is also stepping up to the plate. The company has traditionally been a great supporter of Glendale Middle School and is excited to be part of the Community of Caring initiative. The company recognizes that literacy is the key to education. Accordingly, it has agreed to work with the school to create a book club that brings GE employees into Glendale Middle School to read with students.

“The Community of Caring program is about bringing our entire community together to support our young people, helping them learn valuable life lessons” said Superintendent Withers. “For over a decade, Salt Lake City schools have integrated these values into their classroom and extracurricular activities, and they make a real difference. When teachers, students and parents really understand concepts like respect, trust and responsibility, they interact with each other in a more productive way. It’s a very powerful thing. By partnering with YouthCity on the Community of Caring concept, we hope to increase the impact even further.”

“Giving young people the tools they need to succeed in both the academic and social worlds requires a community-wide effort,” said Mayor Anderson. “Despite the remarkable work of our schools, we cannot expect them to do it all on their own. By developing concrete opportunities, like the mentoring program, around the core Community of Caring values, we are putting words into action in ways that will benefit young people and families, producing real and tangible results, now and in the future.”

YouthCity and the Salt Lake City School District have worked together on several previous projects, bringing arts education, after-school and summer classes, and other activities to students and families. Under this new initiative, the five values will provide a common language upon which YouthCity and the School District can establish opportunities and measure success. The groups will work together to ensure long-term funding of after-school programs, to bring parents into schools, to create more community service activities, and to build new opportunities designed to better serve the young people and families of Salt Lake City.

“Educating our young people in values, or educating for character, is central to the ideals that our country was founded on—ideals that are embedded in our founding documents,” said Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder and honorary chairman for Community of Caring. “Values like caring, respect, responsibility, trust and family define what it means to be human, and serve as powerful guideposts for children and young people in their decision-making. They are values that bring people together across their differences, united in common goals.”

### **About YouthCity**

YouthCity, Salt Lake City’s youth program, is designed to maximize opportunities for young people to succeed in life. YouthCity includes a variety of opportunities for school-aged youth, including employment, government/civics, after-school and summer, arts education and community service programs.

### **About Community of Caring**

Community of Caring is a comprehensive, research-based character education program that has been adopted by almost 1,000 schools in the United States and Canada. Community of Caring was founded in 1982 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. Community of Caring schools teach values everywhere: in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria and playing field. The five core values of Caring, Respect, Responsibility, Trust and Family are integrated into every aspect of school life, including the existing curriculum. The program emphasizes the idea that the ability to reflect and act upon values is essential in shaping lives, illuminating goals and guiding responsible decisions.

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