

The Andre Agassi Foundation Launches Early Childhood Education Initiative

Initial funding from the David and Jillian Gilmour Foundation supports early education for underserved children in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS - Nov. 24, 2008 - State-funded pre-kindergarten programs currently serve just 22 percent of four year olds in the United States; Nevada only serves two percent. However, data proves that quality early childhood education has long-term results.

The Andre Agassi Foundation announces a leading gift from the David and Jillian Gilmour Foundation of \$2.25 million to develop an early childhood education program in Las Vegas. The gift funds the research and planning phase of an early education initiative that includes the hiring of Beth Duncombe as project lead. Duncombe—former Alexander Dawson elementary school principal, Clark County School District teacher and administrator, and recognized leader in curriculum development—is developing a comprehensive plan for the Foundation's foray into early childhood.

"Andre Agassi's commitment to education reform is powerful," commented David Gilmour. "I give to education when there is a need, willingness, and I feel sure that the infrastructure is in place to make it work. Andre gives me a great feeling of trust." The Gilmour's partnership with the Andre Agassi Foundation began in 2005 when David recognized the need to implement kindergarten at the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy with a major \$1 million gift for the building which bears the Gilmour name.

"David Gilmour and I both believe that with education there is hope," said Andre Agassi. "I am so grateful to David and Jillian for their generosity. Working together, we will give underserved children in Las Vegas the gift of self discipline, respect, and confidence through early learning. Early childhood education, when done well, can be a short cut to great progress in education for today's young people, tomorrow's leaders."

David Gilmour's interest in early education developed from his childhood. Gilmour's mother was an opera singer, which forced him to receive his early education from a governess rather than a formalized preschool program. He entered public school at age seven, behind, and struggled to catch up to his classmates' scholastic abilities.

Gilmour's upbringing gave him the determination to excel in business. The Canadian-born business man achieved success in real estate, gold mines, and a South Pacific hotel chain. He founded Fiji Natural Artesian Water, owns Fiji-based luxury resort The Wakaya Club and his most recent endeavor is media company VIV Publishing LLC. VIV includes www.vivmag.com, the first women's interactive all digital magazine and www.zinio.com, the world's largest digital newsstand. David's only child, Erin Gilmour, became passionate about solving some of the social issues of the Caribbean by improving education on the islands, and founded the Erin Gilmour Home and Learning Center for Blind Children. When their daughter was tragically murdered in her early 20s, the Gilmours made the commitment to commemorate her life by making early education available to some of the most underprivileged children in Fiji and throughout the United States.

Philanthropic giving from the Gilmours has resulted in six preschools in Fiji, with a seventh on the way; support of Educational Enrichment Systems (EES) in San Diego, Calif., which offers no-cost, high quality services for young children of low-income, working families; an EES Early

Childhood Campus to open in spring 2009 in Vista, Calif. named for the Gilmours; and the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy's kindergarten building.

"Patterns of behavior develop during children's earliest years and continue into their school years," said David Gilmour. "By giving young underserved children the opportunity to attend preschool, good behavior is formed early on and will be carried out throughout the child's life. If children do not have preschool experience, they never learn how to learn, and therefore it holds their education back throughout their life."

The Andre Agassi Foundation is currently researching early childhood education solutions for proven curriculum, parent education, teacher professional development, health education and community outreach.

Data sources: www.preknow.org; National Institute for Early Education Research; Telluride Foundation Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment, September 2008.

About the Andre Agassi Foundation

The Andre Agassi Foundation is dedicated to transforming U.S. public education for underserved youth. The Foundation drives reform by engaging in practice, policy and partnerships that provide quality education and enrichment opportunities. The Foundation is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit public charity that was established in 1994. Learn more at www.agassifoundation.org.