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**95 Maricopa County Elementary Schools Receive Piper Trust Grants
Totaling \$425,000 to Help Clothe Needy Students**

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ. (May 25, 2006) – As part of its commitment to ensure that Maricopa County children have the essential resources to learn and achieve academically, The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust has awarded 95 Valley public elementary schools grants totaling \$425,000 to purchase back-to-school clothing for their most needy students.

In the last three years, the Trust has awarded 210 grants totaling \$975,000 through its Back-to-School Clothing Project, although this is the first year the grants have been made public.

“The trustees are deeply committed to helping children succeed academically and have increased the grant budget each year for the Back-to-School Clothing Project,” says Judy Jolley Mohraz, president and CEO of The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust. “The number of schools with students in need is extremely high, and many schools face a tremendous challenge when it comes to ensuring that their students’ most basic needs for clothing are met.”

Mohraz notes that the Trust awarded the grants anonymously in the program’s first two years, but that staff and trustees have been moved by the tremendous need that school principals have expressed. “We want to raise awareness about this basic need and encourage others to help schools provide enough clothing so that all students have the opportunity to learn. Clothing can make the difference between a child going to school or staying home.”

A majority of the schools report that they struggle to find enough resources in the community to help those families who are unable to purchase school clothing or uniforms for their children. Often, a team of teachers, social workers, nurses and volunteers works quietly to gather enough clothes to help students with the greatest need throughout the year.

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“The need in our school community for back to school clothing is tremendous,” remarks Kristen Hartsuff, principal of William C. Jack Elementary School in Glendale and a recipient of a \$5,000 grant last year. “This grant helped take the burden off of so many low-income families that struggle each day to make ends meet. The look of excitement and pride on the faces of so many children as they step into their classrooms with new clothes and shoes is priceless. A child with that sense of pride and self-confidence will be able to focus more on academics and learning, which is our ultimate goal.”

In 2005-2006, the Trust awarded \$300,000 to 67 elementary schools and two nonprofit organizations, which purchased clothing for more than 12,400 students. In 2004-2005, clothing for nearly 9,100 students was purchased by 46 schools, which received grants totaling \$250,000.

The grants, which range from \$2,500 to \$5,000, are awarded to public schools based on the percentage of students receiving federal subsidies for the free and reduced lunch program. There are 323 schools in the Valley with 70 percent or more of the student body eligible to receive federal subsidies for the free and reduced lunch program. The Trust has now provided a grant to each of the schools in this category.

Many of the schools are able to leverage their purchases through retailers that offer volume discounts. While some schools purchase school uniform items, others allow children to shop for their own clothing with vouchers or planned shopping trips. In nearly all instances, students are outfitted head to toe with at least one set of new clothing.

The 95 grants awarded for the 2006-2007 school year include: 1 school in Avondale; 1 school in Chandler; 2 schools in El Mirage; 1 school in Gila Bend; 7 schools in Glendale; 1 school in Laveen; 11 schools in Mesa; 64 schools in Phoenix; 1 school in Scottsdale; 3 schools in Tempe and 3 schools in Tolleson.

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust is committed to honoring Virginia Piper’s legacy of making grants to nonprofit organizations whose work enhances the lives of people living in Maricopa County. By strengthening nonprofits in our community and encouraging strategic planning for the future, the Trust strives to make Maricopa County a stronger, healthier and more livable community.

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The Trust, which began its grantmaking in 2000, has awarded more than \$140 million to Maricopa County nonprofit organizations. The Trust focuses its grantmaking in six core areas: children, older adults, arts and culture, healthcare and medical research, education and religious organizations. For more information about the Trust, please visit www.pipertrust.org.