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**112 Maricopa County Elementary Schools Receive Piper Trust Grants
Totaling Nearly \$400,000 to Help Clothe Needy Students**

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ. (May 8, 2007) – 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 112 Valley public elementary schools grants totaling nearly \$400,000 to purchase back-to-school clothing for their most needy students.

In the last four years, the Trust has supported 226 schools with \$1,367,500 through its Back-to-School Clothing Project.

“The trustees are deeply committed to helping children succeed academically and have steadily increased the grant budget 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 continues to grow, 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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“Children cannot learn when they are embarrassed about their clothing or don't have a change of clothes so they can attend school every day,” says Mohraz. “The Piper trustees want to ensure that no child stays at home or fails to learn because of essential school clothes. This is an investment in learning and self esteem for the most vulnerable children of Maricopa County.”

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.

Many of the schools are able to increase the value of the grants 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 112 grants awarded for the 2007-2008 school year include: 1 school in Arlington; 2 schools in Avondale; 2 schools in Buckeye; 3 schools in Chandler; 2 schools in El Mirage; 14 schools in Glendale; 1 school in Goodyear; 1 school in Guadalupe; 1 school in Laveen; 16 schools in Mesa; 4 schools in Peoria; 51 schools in Phoenix; 1 school in Queen Creek; 2 schools in Scottsdale; 11 schools in Tempe.

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.

The Trust, which began its grantmaking in 2000, has awarded more than \$165 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.