



FIGHT FOR CHILDREN TO ANNOUNCE \$10 MILLION INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS TO SERVE 10,000 DC CHILDREN

Lead Gifts Totaling \$1.6 Million Will Kick Off New Teacher Training Program in Honor of Joe Robert, Jr.

EMBARGOED RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, DC (10/3/12) – [Fight For Children](#) will announce the launch of **Joe's Champs**, a transformative early childhood program that will ensure children in DC's highest need neighborhoods are taught by highly-effective early childhood teachers at a press conference on Wednesday, October 10 at 10:30 a.m. at E.L. Haynes Public Charter School in Northwest DC. Joe's Champs is an integral part of a broader \$10 million investment Fight For Children is making in early childhood education in DC through its Ready to Learn DC program. The event will feature the announcement of \$1.6 million in initial funding for the program. This amount includes lead gifts from the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Washington, DC and local business leaders Raul Fernandez, Chuck Kuhn, and Fred Schaufeld.

Fight For Children President & CEO **Michela English** will be joined at the event by UAE Ambassador **Yousef Al Otaiba**; Washington, DC Mayor **Vincent Gray**; Fight for Children Chairman **Raul Fernandez**; **Fred Schaufeld**, a member of Fight For Children's Board of Directors; and **Jenny Niles**, head of E.L. Haynes Public Charter School.

Fight For Children's Ready to Learn DC program focuses squarely on early childhood education for three and four-year-olds. The program is built upon three pillars that focus on schools, teachers and parents: 1) work with the City to hold schools and other programs accountable for making sure children are ready for kindergarten; 2) ensure that all schools and programs in high-need neighborhoods have great early childhood education teachers, supportive school leaders, and the right tools to be successful; and 3) give parents useful information so they can make good choices on where to send their children to preschool and how to be actively involved in their children's education.

Over the next five years, Fight For Children will invest \$10 million in Ready to Learn DC and will serve at least 10,000 children. The bulk of the new investment is in Joe's Champs, which is named in honor of **Joseph E. Robert, Jr.**, Fight For Children's founder who passed away in December 2011. The program will create a pipeline of quality early childhood educators and will support principals as they integrate early childhood classrooms into their schools.

“Research shows that children who attend effective pre-school programs are much more likely to be successful in school,” commented English. “With Joe's Champs we are focusing resources on thousands of young children in DC's highest need neighborhoods. This program directly compliments and enhances the ambitious school reform efforts already underway in the District of Columbia.”

To date, two schools have agreed to take part in the pilot year of the program: the Tree of Life Public Charter School in Northeast and Ingenuity Prep Public Charter School in Southeast. Fight For Children is recruiting additional schools and will ultimately have six in the pilot. The first principals will begin training in the spring of 2013, and the first teachers will begin their training next summer. Within five years, Fight For Children expects to train over 100 teachers. Two established teacher training programs, Capital Teaching Residency (a collaboration between E.L. Haynes Public Charter School and KIPP: DC) and Urban Teacher Center, will provide the teacher training for Joe's Champs.

The contribution from the UAE Embassy is being made in honor of Joe Robert and is in the spirit of the Embassy's longstanding tradition of supporting programs in the communities in which it works. The UAE has previously aided the implementation of innovative childhood education and healthcare initiatives in the US, as evidenced by support for programs such as Boys & Girls Clubs in Los Angeles and Miami, Lexington Academy in New York City, Joplin, Missouri Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools and the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC.

“It is a privilege for the Embassy to support this incredibly ambitious program in honor of Joe Robert. Joe was a visionary and a friend. There is no better way to honor him than to help even more kids get a great start in life,” commented Ambassador Al Otaiba.

Ambassador Al Otaiba will present the gift as a symbol of the Embassy's ongoing commitment to meaningful partnerships with American business leaders, several of whom will also announce their support of the program. “We are thrilled that the philanthropic community is stepping up to make Fight For Children's new program a reality,” said Mr. Fernandez. “This program speaks to the core of what Fight For Children, and our signature event, Fight Night, are all about.”

For more information on the Fight For Children Joe's Champs program, please contact Barbara Martin, Barbara@brandlinkdc.com, 301.229.6770.

About Fight For Children

The late Joseph E. Robert, Jr., created Fight For Children and Fight Night in 1990 as a way to marshal resources to help low-income kids in the nation's capital secure a brighter future. Fight For Children programs focus on improving the quality of early childhood and K-12 education in DC. Fight Night brings together 2,000 heavyweights of business and government, entertainment and community service, as well as legends from the sports and boxing world, for an evening of fun, auctions, exciting entertainment and live professional boxing bouts. One of the most highly acclaimed events in Washington, Fight Night raises funds for Fight For Children and other organizations that provide education and healthcare services to low-income children in Washington, DC. Fight Night 2012 will stage at the Washington Hilton on November 1, 2012.