

## Rochester Area Foundation - News & Publications

Quote of the Moment...

Kites rise highest against  
the wind - not with it.

~Sir Winston Churchill ~

### **IBM To Award \$100,000 To First Steps, Bringing Total Contribution To \$175,000**

*Investment in pre-K readiness effort to provide literacy training for community childcare providers, parents*

 E-MAIL TO A FRIEND

*Press Release*

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

In an announcement to be held today from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. at the Bethany Nursery School (1835 19th Ave NW), IBM Senior State Executive Walt Ling will present the First Steps initiative with a check for \$100,000 to be used for early literacy training. The money, combined with the IBM KidSmart program's Young Explorer computers donated earlier this year, brings IBM's total contribution to First Steps to just over \$175,000.

First Steps will use the money to provide training through Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) for up to 60 childcare providers serving IBM families, as well as other families, in the Rochester area. The providers will be trained on the most recent early literacy research and will receive resources and technical assistance/coaching visits after the initial training. IBM employees will nominate their childcare centers and providers for participation in the training sessions.

A workplace seminar series will also be developed and offered to IBM employees and other community members, to further support them in their efforts to improve their children's preparedness for school.

"Although research has shown a direct correlation between high quality childcare and productivity at work, IBM's donation to the First Steps program is more about doing what's best for the community," said IBM Senior State Executive Walt Ling. "At IBM, we feel that it's important to take the lead in corporate support of such an important issue facing our children, parents, and Rochester and Southeastern Minnesota."

"We appreciate IBM's generous support of the SEEDS early literacy training program, which has already been used to train almost 100 Olmsted county childcare providers this year alone," said First Steps Board Chair Jean Locke. "The SEEDS literacy program helps train our children's earliest teachers so that they can provide proper education to our children in the years when they're developing the fastest. Quality early childcare can make a huge difference in whether or not a child is fully prepared to start school."

For more information on the SEEDS training program, visit the First Steps Web site at [www.firststeps.us](http://www.firststeps.us). To interview a SEEDS training participant or trainer, contact Child Care Resource & Referral Executive Director Pat Gannon at 507-287-2020 x. 232.

#### **About First Steps**

First Steps, an initiative of the Rochester Area Foundation, is a community-wide effort to improve the kindergarten readiness for Rochester children. First Steps is spreading the word about the problem and solutions with education and events for parents, caregivers, educators, and community leaders. First Steps brings together the expertise and resources of community organizations that work with families and children. For more information, visit the First Steps Web site at [www.firststeps.us](http://www.firststeps.us).

#### **About IBM**

IBM is the world's largest information technology company, with nearly 100 years of leadership in helping businesses innovate. Through its Funds for Dependent Care Initiatives and later Global Work Life Fund, IBM has contributed \$2,500,000 since 1990 to enhance

the quantity and quality of dependent care in Rochester and Southeastern Minnesota. For many years, IBM has been one of the largest corporate contributors of cash, equipment, and people to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions across the United States and around the world. For more information on the IBM Kidsmart program and its resources, visit [www.kidsmartearlylearning.org](http://www.kidsmartearlylearning.org).

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