

For Immediate Release

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Huntington to Serve as Presenting Sponsor of

2008 Champion of Children Award Event

Columbus, OH (TBD) – Huntington will serve as Presenting Sponsor of the 2008 Champion of Children Award Event, to be held on February 5, 2008 at the Southern Theater at 6 p.m. and a reception to follow at the Westin. In this role, Huntington will host Champion of Children's 15th annual event honoring one individual, nominated by the community, who has served as an outstanding local advocate for children.

This year's event will focus on what kindergarten readiness is and its importance for school success. Champion of Children's after-work program, produced in a live television panel format moderated by ABC-6/FOX-28's Carol Luper, will be followed by a reception honoring the award recipient.

"You can't overstate the importance of quality early learning programs to prepare children for kindergarten and beyond," said Tom Hoaglin, CEO of Huntington. "Huntington is proud to participate in an effort that not only honors those who have devoted their lives to serving children, but supports quality early learning experiences for central Ohio children. Every child deserves quality early education to prepare for success at all levels of school and life."

"With the support and endorsement of corporations like Huntington, the importance of kindergarten readiness can become a community value for central Ohio," said Linda Kass, Champion of Children chairperson. "Champion of Children is one voice, among many, advocating for early learning as a critical strategic component of the educational process. Quality early learning prepares children for success in kindergarten, a necessary first step to raise the bar and the educational outcomes for our primary and secondary schools."

Champion of Children is a successful and growing community collaboration that addresses inequities in access to quality early learning programs. Since 1999, hundreds of Franklin County children from lower income working families have been able to attend quality learning programs, thanks to the financial support from Champion of Children. Children from birth through age 5, whose families fall in the gap between those receiving public child care assistance and those who are economically self-sufficient, can currently choose among 30 nationally accredited early learning centers in Franklin County that participate in Champion of Children.

For more information on Champion of Children please visit our website, www.championofchildren.org. or call Stephanie Peddicord, 614.231.3790 ext 22.