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KIDS IN NEED TEACHER GRANT APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE

DAYTON, OHIO – MARCH 11, 2005 – Applications for the 2005 Kids In Need Teacher Grants will be available nationwide July 15 through September 30. Kids In Need Teacher Grants, sponsored by specific retail chains and education credit unions, is a program of the SHOPA Kids In Need Foundation.. Up to \$100,000 will be awarded in grants to teachers for innovative classroom projects.

K-12 certified teachers of any subject from public, private, and parochial school systems are eligible to apply. Individual grant amounts are between \$100 and \$500. In 2004, the program awarded more than \$77,000 in grants to 182 teachers.

"This year we are pleased to announce that we have two national sponsors," said Ron Costello, chair of the Teacher Grants Committee and a member of the Kids In Need Foundation Board of Directors. "All K-12 teachers in all 50 states will have access to applications."

Retail sponsors include: Jo-Ann Stores, Inc., nationwide; Office Depot, nationwide; Fred Meyer in the Northwest; Publix Supermarkets in the Southeast; and Price Less Drug Stores in the Sacramento area.

Education credit union sponsors include: First Financial Federal Credit Union, Dayton, OH; CorePlus Federal Credit Union, Norwich, CT; the Northern Kentucky Educators' Federal Credit Union, Highland Heights, KY; Marion School Employees Federal Credit Union, Marion, IN, and Summit Federal Credit Union, Akron, OH.

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The intent of the grants is to offer educators the opportunity to teach original, innovative projects for which no other funding is available. Applications, which can be accessed from the sponsors' outlets or offices and on the sponsors' and Kids In Need Web sites, must be submitted no later than September 30, 2005. To access any sponsor's application, visit www.kidsinneed.net.

"We're looking for projects with direct ties to curricula that are cutting edge," said Costello. "We want to support projects that are engrossing, the kind of projects that make kids eager to go to school."

The Kids In Need Foundation and the Craft and Hobby Association Foundation publish lesson plans of the winning grants in the *Best Practices Guide* as part of the Kids In Need Foundation's mission to recognize, promote, and support initiatives that foster educational excellence. A PDF file of the *Best Practices Guide* is available on the Web sites at www.kidsinneed.net and teacherplace.org.

The SHOPA Foundation for Educational Excellence is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization and was founded in 1995. In addition to the Teacher Grants program, the Kids In Need Foundation provides free school supplies to impoverished children through its National Network of 21 Resource Centers throughout the U.S. Kids In Need serves 1.1 million children and 65,000 teachers annually.

The School, Home, & Office Products Association (SHOPA), founded in 1991, is a non-profit trade association representing approximately 1,5000 manufacturers, manufacturer representatives, retailers, wholesales, distributors, commercial/contract stationers, and service companies involved in the production, distribution, and sale of school supplies and office products through mass market and commercial channels.

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