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Foundation Says Tax Burden Can Be Reduced, Impact Can Be More *Kids In Need Foundation Empowering Future Taxpayers Through Proper Tools*

Dayton, OH – May 15, 2006 – It has been exactly one month since the deadline for paying taxes passed. Do you know how it's being spent? As Americans pack away files for the year, one national foundation continues its work to reduce tax burdens in a real, lasting way – by providing America's children with the tools to get ahead in life.

"A better education leads to jobs and provides a framework for careers and wage earners," says SHOPA Kids In Need Executive Director Kathy Spencer. "By working with and encouraging businesses to provide critical learning tools to underprivileged children, we can expand and strengthen America's future workforce. A greater number of qualified workers can translate into a growing economy in which the tax burden is shared more equally. If we fail to provide basic tools to educate our children, we remain stuck in a quagmire."

The SHOPA Kids In Need Foundation is committed to channeling school supplies from its retail marketing partners such as Target, OfficeMax, Publix, and Office Depot to students who otherwise could not afford them. The Foundation does this through initiatives such as the School Box program, the Teacher Grants program, and a national network of 21 Resource Centers, where teachers from low income schools can procure needed student school supplies at no expense. During the past 10 years, the Kids In Need Foundation has helped more than 6.5 million schoolchildren in the U.S., distributing millions upon millions of dollars worth of product.

Studies show that schoolchildren lose confidence and do poorly in school when they don't have the same school supplies as other children. The so called "Digital Divide" also continues to increase, further putting students in less affluent communities behind. Teachers who have received product from the Kids In Need Foundation cite marked increases in attendance, significant improvement in classroom behavior, and better communication with parents and students as direct effects of giving students even simple supplies. Grateful teachers and students flood the Foundation's offices with letters of thanks, testifying to the way simple tools have changed the lives of underserved children, indicating the dramatic impact school supplies can have. The Foundation continuously seeks additional suppliers and donors.

“Sadly, basic school supplies remain a luxury to millions of children in this country,” Spencer explains. “Families spend an average of \$82 per child in preparation for school each fall, and it’s easy to forget about the many American families who simply cannot afford that price tag. Teachers spend an average of \$1,000 of their own money annually to help supply their students and their classrooms.

“When children are given basic school supplies, we see their confidence increase, their grades go up, and their attitudes change, all because they’ve been put on a level playing field with the children around them. We cannot continue to put children at a disadvantage at these critical early stages and then step back in amazement that these same children in adulthood have trouble making a positive contribution to our economy. Making these changes, and helping disadvantaged kids to succeed, is as easy as one pencil, one ruler, or one book. Forget all the studies that prove the same thing – common sense tells you that when you have confident, inspired students, you ultimately have confident, inspired adults who contribute more to their communities.”

According to the Congressional Budget Office, approximately \$360 billion dollars is paid out in entitlements each year – a figure expected to double under current conditions by 2040. By contrast, the amount spent on education is just slightly higher -- \$400 billion. In addition, the U.S. spends more on education than any other nation, yet consistently ranks in the middle or near the bottom in virtually every educational category among 25 major industrialized nations.

“The more folks we prepare for life skills and careers, the more folks there are to share in the overall tax burden and the less we have on the entitlement rolls,” Spencer added. “Also, the less businesses and individuals have to pay in taxes, research shows, the more they provide to charitable and philanthropic causes. Through education, we can break this vicious circle.”

About the SHOPA Kids In Need Foundation

SHOPA Kids In Need Foundation is a national non-profit organization providing school supplies to impoverished children and under-funded teachers. A 501(c)(3) charitable organization founded in 1995 by the School, Home, & Office Products Association (SHOPA), the Foundation’s mission is to recognize, promote, and support initiatives that foster educational excellence. The National Network of Kids In Need Resource Centers includes 21 facilities that allow teachers from low-income schools to obtain free school supplies for their students. In addition, Kids In Need Teacher Grants provide K-12 educators with funding to provide innovative learning opportunities for students. The SHOPA Kids In Need Foundation has distributed more than \$200 million in school supplies since its founding, directly benefiting 1.3 million students and 75,000 teachers annually, and has awarded more than \$660,000 in grants to teachers. For more information, visit www.kidsinneed.net.

About SHOPA

SHOPA, founded in 1991, is a nonprofit trade association representing nearly 900 manufacturers, manufacturer representatives, retailers, wholesalers, distributors, commercial/contract stationers, and service companies involved in the production, distribution, and sale of school supplies and office products. The Association also produces SBTS (SHOPA Buyer-to-Seller) Marketplace events, which facilitate pre-scheduled and one-on-one meetings. SHOPA, in cooperation with Messe Frankfurt and PROPAPER, is producing Paperworld USA in November, the international trade event for the school and office products industry. For more information, visit www.shopa.org.

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Editors Note:

Spencer Available for Interview

Hi-res Photos Available

Student/Teacher Testimonials Available

21 Centers Nationwide