



NEWS RELEASE

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For more information contact
Sheree Savage, Saint Paul Public Library
651.266-7029 or sheree.savage@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Saint Paul youngsters to blast off to kindergarten

Saint Paul, MN (Sept. 26, 2007) - Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman's education team has collaborated with Saint Paul Public Schools, Saint Paul Public Library, the Greater Twin Cities United Way and other community stakeholders to create a program called Blast Off to Kindergarten. The new program will be unveiled during the 125 Years of Words and Music celebration of the Saint Paul Public Library and the Schubert Club from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 30 in Rice Park downtown Saint Paul.

Blast Off to Kindergarten will help prepare children and families for the transition into kindergarten and provide the necessary foundation for continued success in school. Research has proven that children not well prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten can often fall behind their peers for the rest of their academic careers.

"Blast off to Kindergarten will be a model for what can be accomplished when we work collaboratively to enhance educational opportunities in Saint Paul. Our focus on early literacy through our libraries will make a real difference in children's lives," said Mayor Coleman.

The Blast Off to Kindergarten website, www.blastofftok.org, is an interactive tool that creates awareness of resources available to families and care givers for children preparing for kindergarten.

The website offers activities and books to support the skills that are necessary for kindergarten, steps to take in enrolling children in school, and many links to informative websites. Helpful information is organized month-by-month, but the activities can be used anytime throughout the year. Links to the Saint Paul Public School District and the Saint Paul Public Libraries are also featured. The website offers information in English, Hmong, Spanish and Somali.

For more information, please visit www.blastofftok.org.

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Photo Opportunity

Starting at 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 30 in Rice Park, downtown Saint Paul, Greater Twin Cities United Way will be providing 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies to children preparing for kindergarten.

Contact:

Sheree Savage

Saint Paul Public Library

sheree.savage@ci.stpaul.mn.us

(651)266-7029 office

(651)325-1662 cell

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