

January 31, 2011 - The Community Foundation Gives Six-Figure Endowment to Shreveport-Bossier Area

\$100,000 “Genius Endowment” Created in Celebration of Foundation’s 50th Anniversary

The Community Foundation today unveiled the creation of a \$100,000 endowment aimed at finding inventive solutions to challenges facing the Shreveport-Bossier area. The six-figure “Genius Fund” is a gift to the community from The Foundation, in celebration of its 50th anniversary year. Each year, the fund will yield at least a \$5,000 “Genius Grant,” that will continue to grow over the years, awarding the best idea for solving an annually chosen problem affecting the community.

The announcement came during a tree-planting ceremony at Pinegrove Elementary school this morning. When making the special announcement, Community Foundation Executive Director Paula Hickman said, “This Genius grant is the perfect way to celebrate our organization and its history: we believe in the power of ideas, we recognize the strength that comes from collaboration, and we are committed to making this community a better place for all its citizens. We are proud of our 50-year legacy of serving the community, and look forward to the future 50!”

For the inaugural year of the Genius Fund, The Foundation has chosen to focus on solving a key educational issue: how to increase the percentage of Caddo Parish third graders reading at basic and above grade level. Specifically, The Foundation will give the \$5,000 prize to the best idea to increase this percentage to 95 percent by the spring of 2014, from the current level of 61 percent. Because the \$100,000 fund is endowed, its value and the grant awarded from the fund are expected to increase each year.

Shreveport Mayor Cedric Glover also attended the event and said of the gift, “On behalf of the citizens, children and families of Shreveport, I applaud and thank the members of The Community Foundation for the presentation of this incredible and perpetual gift,” said Mayor Glover. “We know that it takes committed inspirational leaders and visionaries such as your members, to keep the needs of the community first, and meeting those needs a priority. I am extremely proud that the initial year of the endowment will focus on education and improving the reading levels of our boys and girls. Because of your generosity, they will have the tools and resources to reach their full potential.”

This year, The Community Foundation is partnering with international organization, InnoCentive, to launch the ideas competition. InnoCentive helps organizations take a more collaborative approach to problem resolution by connecting those seeking solutions with a worldwide network of problem solvers. InnoCentive has worked with leading commercial, public sector, and non-profit organizations such as Eli Lilly, Medtronic, NASA, nature.com, Procter & Gamble, Roche, Rockefeller Foundation and The Economist. When in 2011 the company decided to offer its services to nonprofits for a limited time, The Community Foundation seized the opportunity to tap into InnoCentive’s global network of ideas.

“At The Community Foundation we are in the ideas business,” said Hickman. “The benefits we have been able to share with our community – from providing health and social services, to ensuring a robust arts and culture community, to supporting projects that invigorate our economy – they would not have been possible without great ideas.”

In addition to being listed on InnoCentive’s website, The Community Foundation’s Challenge, “Creating a Community of Successful Readers,” will also be featured on The Economist’s website. Although the competition is open to ideas from around the world, interested individuals in Shreveport-Bossier can also register on InnoCentive’s website to become official “solvers” for the organization. The Community Foundation plans to make the ideas competition, including awarding the \$5,000 Genius grant, an annual event.

The Community Foundation’s challenge is available on Innocentive’s website at <https://gw.innocentive.com/ar/challenge/9932609> and on The Economist’s website at <http://ideas.economist.com/challenges>.

The Genius Fund is The Community Foundation’s gift to the community in recognition of its 50th anniversary year. The Foundation has a number of exciting events and special initiatives planned in 2011 to celebrate this important milestone. For more information on these events, the Genius Fund or other initiatives, visit The Foundation’s website at www.nlacf.org or contact The Community Foundation at (318) 221-0582.