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LATEST *MARIGOLD* CONTEST WINNER INVESTS \$5,000 GRANT IN ROCHESTER ELEMENTARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS AND HELP IMPROVE MATH AND READING SKILLS

BOSTON (November 20, 2012) — Bruce Pollock, 59, is not a professional teacher, but since retiring from IBM in 2009, he's dedicated his time to improving the academic performance of elementary school children in Rochester, N.Y., ranked by the Brookings Institute as the 13th poorest metropolitan city compared to other cities. As the founder and Executive Director of the Friends of Educational Excellence (FREE), an organization he founded in 2010, FREE Partnerships not only helps students and teachers succeed in school but it also helps to build a stronger Rochester community.

Bruce is the fifth grand-prize winner of the *Marigold Ideas for Good* contest, a social-action campaign run by Participant Media and Encore.org that recognizes adults 50+ who've created projects to improve their communities. Beginning in April, five winners each month were selected to receive a \$5,000 grant toward their project, and one grand-prize winner each month receives an educational or service-learning adventure with Road Scholar.

“FREE Partnerships is a collaboration of community organizations that partner with schools to provide in-school volunteers who tutor students in reading, writing, and math under the guidance of classroom teachers,” said Bruce. “While still working at IBM in 2005, I helped form a partnership between my temple and School 52 in Rochester. I was the volunteer coordinator. Improvements in student academic performance came gradually year after year as we helped build student capacity. Today, School 52 is ranked second in English and third in math out of 38 public elementary schools in Rochester. There is no silver bullet to improving schools. It takes a great principal, dedicated teachers and parents, innovative approaches to teaching, and supportive community partners.”

While not a Rochester native, Bruce and his family have deep roots in the community. His father was born there, attended the University of Rochester, and met and married Bruce's mother there. They moved away, settling in Maryland, where Bruce grew up. Like his father, Bruce also attended the University of Rochester and met his future wife there. They married, had three children and settled in Connecticut, where he worked for IBM. And like his father and grandfather before him, Bruce's son Michael also attended the University of Rochester and met his wife there.

His connection to Rochester doesn't end there. After Bruce and his wife divorced in 2000, he attended his 25th college reunion and met Cheryl; you guessed it—a University of Rochester graduate and employee. They married in 2003 and he returned to Rochester to settle down with his new wife in Pittsford.

“I've been so blessed in my life and realized once I retired that it was time for me to give back,” Bruce said. “I grew up outside Washington, D.C. in the '50s and '60s and witnessed the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the environmental movement up close. Being so close to such monumental change in this

country instilled in me a passion for social justice and helping underprivileged people achieve their potential and have equal opportunities.”

In 2010, FREE Partnerships began with just three schools and has since expanded to 10 schools. Last year there were more than 500 volunteers in these schools, but more volunteers are needed to realize the gains of School 52.

“We’re always looking for great volunteers,” Bruce said. “If you work well with young children and are willing to donate at least an hour a week, visit our website and fill out an application. We currently have everyone from college students to grandparents dedicating their time and skills to helping these children.”

Bruce will use the \$5,000 Marigold Ideas for Good grant to recruit, train, and support more volunteers in FREE Partnerships schools. In addition to winning a \$5,000 grant, Bruce won a \$5,000 Road Scholar program, including round-trip airfare.

“My wife and I will be married 10 years this year and we never went on a honeymoon,” Bruce said. “After talking to Cheryl, we agreed that we’ll use the Road Scholar program to take a combined honeymoon and 10-year anniversary in Paris, France. Once the school year ends, we’ll be taking our first trip to Paris together. We can’t wait.”

To learn more about FREE Partnerships, please visit the website at: www.freepartnerships.org.

Bruce and his wife will be traveling with Road Scholar on its *Independent Paris: People, Places, Culture* program. To learn more about this program, please visit www.road scholar.org/10034.

About Road Scholar

Not-for-profit Road Scholar’s mission is to inspire adults to learn, discover and travel. Our learning adventures engage expert instructors, provide extraordinary access, and stimulate discourse and friendship among people for whom learning is the journey of a lifetime. Since inception, more than 5 million people have enrolled in our 6,500 iconic educational adventures offered annually in 50 states and 150 countries around the world.

Road Scholar educational adventures are created by Elderhostel, Inc., the not-for-profit world leader in lifelong learning since 1975. To learn more, please visit our website at www.road scholar.org/press.

About Participant Media

Participant Media (participantmedia.com) is a Los Angeles-based global entertainment company specializing in socially-relevant documentary and narrative feature films, television, publishing and digital media. Participant exists to tell compelling, entertaining stories that bring to the forefront real issues that shape our lives. For each of its projects, Participant creates extensive social action and advocacy programs, which provide ideas and tools to transform the impact of the media experience into individual and community action. Participant’s online Social Action Network is TakePart (takepart.com). Participant’s films include *The Kite Runner*, *Charlie Wilson’s War*, *Darfur Now*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Good Night, and Good Luck*, *Syriana*, *The Visitor*, *The Soloist*, *Food, Inc.*, *The Cove*, *The Craziest*, *Countdown to Zero*, *Waiting for “Superman”*, *Fair Game*, *PAGE ONE: Inside the New York Times*, *The Help*, *Contagion* and the *Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*.

About Encore.org

Encore.org (formerly Civic Ventures) aims to engage millions of people in the second half of the life in encore careers – combining personal meaning, continued income and social impact – to produce a windfall of talent to solve society’s greatest problems.

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