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***SCHOOL NIGHT: BACK TO SCHOOL WITH THE STARS PROVES LEGEND-ARY  
AS FIGHT FOR CHILDREN RAISES \$1.5 MILLION TO BENEFIT DC SCHOOLS***  
*Three DC Schools Awarded \$100,000 Grants to Reward Best Practices in Education*

**Washington, D.C.** [April 25, 2008] – Fight for Children, an independent non-profit organization committed to closing the achievement gap in DC schools, hosted more than 800 education supporters and Washington VIPs last night to raise more than \$1.5 million to support DC public, charter, and independent schools. The 2008 [School Night](#) fundraising gala was held at the Washington Convention Center.

At the culmination of School Night, School Night Chairman **Sheila C. Johnson** joined Fight for Children Chairman **Joseph E. Robert** and CEO **Michela English** to announce the awarding of \$100,000 grants to three DC schools: **Strong John Thomson Elementary School, E.L. Haynes Public Charter School, and San Miguel School**. The grants were made as part of Fight for Children’s Quality Schools Initiative, initiated in 2007. These three “Champions of Quality” – one public, one public charter and one independent school – fit multiple eligibility requirements for the program, including increased student achievement and demonstrated best practices based on quality indicators in the areas of leadership, instruction, and professional development.

An independent selection committee of leaders across DC’s education spectrum narrowed the applicants to seven finalists. Four runners-up–**Cleveland Elementary School, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Capital City Public Charter School, and Washington Jesuit Academy**. each received \$10,000 cash grants.

Fight For Children unveiled two innovative “systems of giving” at School Night that allowed guests to make an immediate, high-impact benefit to local schools – “**The Hall of Art**” and an exclusive partnership with **DonorsChoose.org**. “The Hall of Art” showcased a gallery of art created by DC schoolchildren. Fight for Children will donate 100% of the proceeds from the sale of the art directly to the student artists’ schools. In a revolutionary partnership introducing philanthropic micro-giving to the charity gala industry, Fight for Children presented School Night guests with \$100 gift cards to [DonorsChoose.org](#), a direct-donation website to benefit America’s classrooms. School Night guests redeemed these gift cards at six computer kiosks connected to the Internet, allowing guests to fund DC classroom projects with the click of a mouse.

Fight For Children’s live auction wowed the crowd with fantastic prizes, including a Lion-themed package featuring behind-the-scenes tours of the lions and tigers at the **National Zoo and Disney’s Animal Kingdom**; a sports package of prime **Washington Nationals** tickets and a basketball clinic with the **Washington Mystics**; and an entertainment package featuring lunch with Fight for Children Board Member **Quincy Jones**, tickets to the **2009 Grammy Awards** and a guitar used and signed by Hannah Montana herself, **Miley Cyrus**.

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School Night was hosted by Fight for Children's founder, Joe E. Robert, Jr, chairman and CEO of J.E. Robert Companies (JER), Chairman Sheila C. Johnson, co-chairs The Honorable & Mrs. Adrian Fenty, Fight for Children CEO & President Michela English and dozens of DC celebrities, who played their part as "educational Stars" representing outstanding achievement in their respective fields. Stars at School Night included Executive Chef **Todd Gray** of Equinox, NBC4 anchor **Barbara Harrison**, Channel 9 News Anchor **JC Hayward**, former Congressman **Suzan Murray**, Chief Veterinarian of the National Zoo.

During the pre-dinner reception, guests were treated to a performance by the [Urban Nation H.I.P H.O.P. Choir](#), founded by Sheila C. Johnson, which emphasizes excellence and discipline in all aspects of a child's life. Each participant is required to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 and attend educational and motivational workshops and seminars.

Five-time Grammy winner [John Legend](#) headlined the evening's entertainment. His debut studio album, *Get Lifted*, went platinum. He is currently working on his third, as yet untitled, studio album. Legend has long been involved in charities and philanthropy worldwide. [Big Ray & the Kool Kats](#) followed Legend's performance attendees dancing to big band, swing, Motown, and Top 40 tunes. Led by trumpeter Ray Caddell, the band has performed across the world, including Las Vegas, New York City, Cabo San Lucas, and DC's own Kennedy Center.

Fight For Children is grateful to the many individual and corporate sponsors of School Night, including Terry & Kathleen Golden, Donald E. Graham, Sheila C. Johnson, Joseph E. Robert, Jr., CityBridge Foundation, Freddie Mac Foundation, the Kimsey Foundation, Verizon Wireless, the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, Mario Morino, Comcast, Fannie Mae, Neil & Marcy Cohen, GEICO, William Wolfe, Building Hope, Capital One, PEPCO, Roger & Vicki Sant, and George & Trish Vradenburg, and Washington Life Magazine.

**Fight For Children**, founded in 1990 by business and civic leader Joe E. Robert, Jr., is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to providing all children in the District of Columbia the tools they need to grow, learn, and succeed. Fight For Children has raised over \$80 million in private contributions, investing these resources to create education, leadership and health care programs, as well as providing direct support to over 150 youth-serving organizations in the greater DC area. For more information, visit [www.fightforchildren.org](http://www.fightforchildren.org).

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