

FLORIDA LITERACY COALITION PRESS RELEASE

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BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF FLORIDA RECEIVES OUTSTANDING BUSINESS PARTNER AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTION TO LITERACY

ORLANDO, Florida (May 21, 2011) – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) recently received the Outstanding Business Partner Award from the Florida Literacy Coalition at the 2011 Florida Literacy Awards Banquet held in Lake Mary, Fla.

In 2008, BCBSF's generous pledge of \$360,000 enabled the establishment of the Florida Health Literacy Initiative. This program combines English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction and health education in a multi-disciplinary approach that teaches English to adults and families while helping these individuals acquire skills and knowledge to make informed choices regarding their health and nutrition.

"It's been a pleasure working with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida on this Initiative," said Greg Smith, Executive Director of FLC. "They are truly committed to reducing barriers to health care and supporting innovative, grassroots approaches to health education, awareness and training."

Since the Initiative's inception, 44 grants of up to \$5,000 have been awarded to literacy organizations across the state and more than 3,200 students have benefited from health literacy instruction. More importantly, what they are learning appears to be making a difference. Students improved an average of 38 percent in their basic health knowledge as measured by the program's health literacy assessments. Many students have reported that they are eating healthier and exercising more. Half the students have applied for health insurance available to low income individuals such as Medicare, Medicaid and Florida Kid Care.

These are just a few of the projects and activities that have taken place in the last two years, and none of it would have been made possible without the generous support of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida. “BCBSF has set a very high standard of what it means to be a good corporate citizen and their impact on literacy in Florida has been substantial,” Smith said.

About the Florida Literacy Conference

The 27th annual Florida Literacy Conference, “Open Books Open Minds,” took place May 4-6, at the Orlando Marriott Lake Mary in Lake Mary, Fla. The conference offered a diverse selection of interactive workshops led by literacy experts on a variety of topics including adult basic education, literacy, English for speakers of other languages and family literacy. Sponsors of the 2011 Florida Literacy Conference included the Florida Department of Education, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Dollar General Literacy Foundation, Publix Super Markets Charities and Florida TechNet.

About the Florida Literacy Coalition

Established in 1985, The Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) promotes, supports and advocates the effective delivery of quality adult and family literacy services in the state of Florida. As a statewide umbrella literacy organization and the host of Florida’s State Adult and Family Literacy Resource Center, FLC provides a range of services to support more than 300 adult education, literacy and family literacy providers throughout Florida. Special emphasis is placed on assisting community-based literacy organizations with training and program development needs. For more information about the FLC call (407) 246-7110 or visit www.floridaliteracy.org.

Photography

2010 Outstanding Business Partner Award (L-R): Nashad Khon, President of FLC; Tony Jenkins, Market President for Central Florida of BCBSF; Sharon Hackney, Senior Manager, Community Affairs of BCBSF; Greg Smith, Executive Director of FLC

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