

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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**Poor Preschoolers in Wichita, Kansas Collect Pennies for
Poorer Preschoolers in the village of Mukuru in Nairobi, Kenya**

WICHITA, Kan., December 4, 2009 – They are members of some of the poorest families in Wichita, but the children who attend The Opportunity Project Early Learning Center in north Wichita received a rich lesson in giving during the month of November. These little ones learned about the ill-fated children in the Mukuru slums of Kenya and collected pennies to send to their peers who attend the Gorretti Nursery School there.

“This has been a remarkable experience for the children at TOP. Coming from low-income families themselves, they are used to being the recipients of donations. This is the first time many of them have ever had the opportunity to experience the joy of giving,” said TOP North director, Jeannene Schweitzer. “It’s great lesson for anyone to learn, that regardless of your own circumstances there are always those who have even greater needs.”

During the four weeks of education and fundraising, referred to as the “Pennies for Preschoolers Project,” TOP students celebrated the Mukuru children by wearing red (the color of the Gorretti Nursery schoolers’ uniforms); exchanged photographs, drawings and letters; played African games, listened to African music, and tasted foods from that region.

The project wrapped up with the TOP children placing all the pennies they had collected, inside an outline of the continent of Africa drawn on the floor of their indoor play space.

The money collected will be sent to the Gorretti Nursery School so the children there can have a party celebrating their countries independence, which falls on December 12.

With an estimated population of 100,000 people, Mukuru residents are primarily young parents with families. HIV/AIDS is prevalent, leaving many of the children vulnerable or orphaned.

The Opportunity Project (TOP) Early Learning Centers are a component of the Wichita TOP Children’s Fund, a 501(c)(3) charity based in Wichita, Kansas. TOP Early Learning Centers provide educational day care and preschool in some of Wichita’s poorest areas; Oaklawn and north central Wichita. Dedicated to creating school readiness for at-risk children, TOP’s mission is to improve life outcomes for Kansas’ children in poverty and to collaborate with educators elsewhere to improve early education for all children living in poverty.

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Filling the Need in Africa – Four-year-olds at The Opportunity Project Early Learning Center north take their turn at adding the pennies they collected to an outline of Africa. During the month of November, the preschoolers learned about the African culture and raised money for the needy preschoolers in Nairobi, Kenya.



A Sea of Change – During the month of November, children and staff of The Opportunity Project Early Learning Centers north collected pennies for preschoolers who attend the Gorretti Nursery School in the Mukuru slum of Nairobi, Kenya. Four hundred and thirty-three dollars was collected.