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## Bank of America to Present \$1 Million Challenge Grant to Dallas Arts Learning Initiative (DALI); First Corporate Gift Made to the Initiative Will Create Educational Opportunities for the Children and Families of Dallas

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DALLAS, Feb. 26 /PRNewswire/ -- Bank of America today announced that it will bestow a \$1 million challenge grant from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation to the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative (DALI). The grant is the first corporate gift to the newly formed program, a groundbreaking partnership between the City of Dallas, Dallas Independent School District and local cultural organizations. DALI is managed by **Big Thought**, a Dallas-based non-profit learning partnership.

The DALI donation is part of Bank of America's corporate giving program, and is being announced as the company unveils "Bank of Opportunity(TM)," the theme for its new brand positioning. "Bank of Opportunity" reflects Bank of America's unique role in helping individuals, businesses and communities around the world realize opportunities to achieve their goals.

Bank of America's grant to DALI is one of several significant charitable donations that will be announced in the coming weeks. Each will address critical needs of communities throughout the U.S. in which the bank operates.

Representatives from the City of Dallas, Dallas ISD, **Big Thought** and Bank of America will commemorate the grant presentation at a luncheon later today at the Dallas Museum of Art. Cheyenne Kimball, teenage singer-songwriter and Frisco, Texas native, will help celebrate the grant presentation by reflecting on the importance the arts have played in her life and performing for Dallas ISD students in attendance.

"We believe the greatest opportunity that we can give our children is a solid education," said Laura Whitley, Dallas market president, Bank of America. "Research shows that arts learning increases student engagement, literacy and critical thinking skills. Our support of DALI, and the impact we know it will make for students and families across Dallas, is truly a source of great pride for Bank of America."

An estimated \$39.8 million program, DALI is believed to be one of the most comprehensive city-wide arts-learning initiatives in U.S. history. The program will provide high-quality arts learning experiences for Dallas children and families. The three main goals of the programs are to:

- Increase the amount and quality of arts education in Dallas ISD elementary schools;
- Work with the City of Dallas to create networks that coordinate arts

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- programming for children and families at the neighborhood level; and
- Work with Dallas cultural providers to use the arts as a tool in the teaching of science, math, social studies and language arts, as well as bolstering fine arts education.

A recent report from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practice (Issue Brief dated May 1, 2002) indicates the integration of arts assists states in providing an opportunity for at-risk youth to acquire the competencies necessary to becoming economically self-sufficient. DALI will unite Dallas' civic, educational and cultural resources to support education wherever children and families learn in every Dallas public school and neighborhood.

"On behalf of all the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative partners, I'd like to thank Bank of America for this extraordinary gift. We're proud to welcome them as DALI's lead corporate partner," said Gigi Antoni, Executive Director, **Big Thought**. "Bank of America is a longtime supporter of innovative educational programming in our community. Their generosity has reached thousands -- this gift will help us to reach thousands more."

Bank of America's grant to DALI is the latest in the company's proud history of supporting arts-education programs in Dallas. In the past several years, Bank of America has donated more than \$3 million to organizations dedicated to enriching the lives of the students and residents through the arts, including \$1 million grants to The Dallas Center for the Performing Arts and the Booker T. Washington Arts Magnet.

The DALI program will complement these previous grants by enabling a systemic change within the Dallas ISD. This collaborative program will provide opportunities to 30 neighborhoods and 100,000 students throughout Dallas ISD by raising the quality of and access to arts learning; coordinating and strengthening arts providers; and communicating opportunities to families throughout the community.

"Arts education is a crucial element in the overall development of our students' academic success," said Michael Hinojosa, General Superintendent Dallas ISD. "Significant grants such as this one from Bank of America will pay enormous dividends as we travel toward our goal of being the best urban school district in the nation by 2010."

#### About **Big Thought**

**Big Thought** is one of the largest non-profit learning partnerships in the nation, inspiring, empowering, and uniting children and communities through education, arts and culture. Formed in 1987, the Dallas, Texas-based organization offers a diverse array of arts and culture-based performances, workshops, cultural excursions and multi-visit residencies for children and teens, and provides professional development and training to help adults use these programs. **Big Thought's** programs reach an average of 400,000 students, teachers and family members each year in schools, libraries, museums, juvenile facilities and community centers. Programs are presented in affiliation with Young Audiences, Inc. More information on **Big Thought** can be found at <http://www.bigthought.org/>.

#### About City of Dallas

The City of Dallas delivers public safety, economic development, sanitation, water, planning and other municipal government services to millions of residents, visitors and businesses each year. To access city services online, visit <http://www.dallascityhall.com/> or call 311 from within the city limits to request non-emergency services. Dallas is the City that Works.

#### About Dallas ISD

The Dallas Independent School District, the 12th largest school district in the nation with a diverse population of more than 160,000 students, is committed to becoming a leader in urban education and student achievement. District students come from homes in which 70 different languages are spoken. Serving these students are more than 19,000

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employees, making the Dallas ISD one of the largest employers in the city. A voter-approved \$1.37 billion building program is changing the look of Dallas neighborhoods with 21 new schools and more than 1,600 classrooms and renovations to existing schools to improve the learning environment for district students. We educate and graduate students ready for college. <http://www.dallasisd.org/> .

#### About Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy

In 2005, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation embarked on an unprecedented \$1.5 billion philanthropic goal over the next 10 years. The bank has announced it will donate \$200 million in 2007, making Bank of America one of the most generous corporate donors in the country. The bank approaches giving through a national strategy called "neighborhood excellence" under which it works with local leaders to identify and meet the most pressing needs of communities. Through Team Bank of America, bank associate volunteers contribute more than 650,000 hours each year to improve the quality of life in their communities nationwide. For more information about Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy, please visit <http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation> .

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