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PRESS RELEASE

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Linda Vista Students Learn Life Lessons Through Video Games

SAN DIEGO, CA (February 2, 2010) – Two local organizations have joined forces to provide dozens of twelve and thirteen olds from Linda Vista the opportunity to not only play video games – they’re learning how to make them.

This new program is the result of a partnership between The Office Games, a business and gaming center equipped with dozens of state-of-the-art computer terminals, and Mission Valley YMCA. Through this agreement, students from the YMCA-run PRYDE after-school program at Montgomery Middle School visit The Office Games’ state-of-the-art business/gaming center in Mission Valley once a month. The store shuts down for 2 hours and the students, already adept *playing* video games, take classes in basic computing and game design in an effort to teach them more about an industry that analysts estimate tops more than \$19 billion in revenue worldwide each year. And the benefits go beyond money – recent studies have shown that doctors and other professionals who rely on dexterity perform significantly better if they also have played video games regularly.

“They are learning that video games are more than just games – this is a serious business with real-world benefits,” says Payam Manavi, CEO of The Office Games and a University City High graduate. “I want these young people to see what’s possible, that they can pursue an interest, and with hard work, turn that into a productive career.”

For most of the PRYDE students, this experience is a first. While The Office Games store in Mission Valley is only a few miles from Montgomery Middle School, the cutting-edge facility is worlds away from their Linda Vista neighborhood, where gangs, drugs, and violence are never far away.

"The goal of the PRYDE Program is to build self-esteem in at-risk youth and help give them the confidence they need to make positive choices in tough neighborhoods," said Dick Webster, VP/Executive Director of Mission Valley YMCA. "Using a medium they understand – video games and computers - this partnership allows kids to have fun while learning real-world skills they can use."

Background

The PRYDE Program run by Mission Valley YMCA is a fully-subsidized, after-school program available to students at 1 middle school and 3 elementary schools in Linda Vista. Specifically, it is targeted towards "at-risk" students selected by the faculty at Chesterton, Kit Carson, and Linda Vista Elementary Schools, and Montgomery Middle School. The program seeks to instill self-confidence in youth while steering them away from at-risk behavior through various "clubs" like Robotics, Sports, Arts & Crafts, etc. The program is a result of a partnership between the schools and Mission Valley YMCA, and is funded solely through donations to Mission Valley YMCA's Annual Support Campaign.

For more info on the PRYDE Program or other programs at Mission Valley YMCA, visit: www.missionvalley.ymca.org.

***The Office Games** is a comprehensive, digital media experience delivering the latest business applications and gaming solutions in a sophisticated high-tech environment. Designed for people on the go, who want to check email, print a document or find discount coupons for nearby stores while out of the home or office, or for the game enthusiasts with a desire to play the latest PC and XBOX 360 games, The Office Games offers state-of-the-art services coupled with modern convenience. For more information, visit: www.theofficegames.com*

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