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High School Finds New Home at Richmond Town Square

RICHMOND HEIGHTS, OH (October 6, 2008) – Soon high school students will have a whole new reason to go to Richmond Town Square Mall.

On October 16, 2008, Indianapolis-based non-profit Simon Youth Foundation (SYF) and the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County will open the North Coast Academy, an alternative high school serving 13 area school districts.

“The Richmond Town Square facility offers greater possibilities of expanded programming, career opportunities and new partnerships,” said Dr. Harry Eastridge, Superintendent, Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County. “Most importantly, the at-risk youth attending North Coast Academy will attend a facility that is located in a welcoming environment that demonstrates they are valued by their community and school district of residence.”

The North Coast Academy opening is made possible by a donation of under-utilized space from Sears Holdings Corporation at the Sears store in Richmond Town Square and was designed by Dorsky Hodgson Parish Yue Architects. It offers students and teachers four classrooms, a science lab, offices, a conference room, reception area, and a staff lounge.

“Sears Holdings is proud to work with Simon Youth Foundation and the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County in the creation of the North Coast Academy. Our company always strives to be a contributing member of the communities in which we operate and we believe the North Coast Academy will be an important tool for educating students who would otherwise have difficulty learning in a traditional setting. We wish all of the students the greatest success,” Stated James Terrell, vice president, real estate for Sears Holdings Corporation.

North Coast Academy is one of 24 Education Resource Centers (ERCs) SYF has established in 11 states across the U.S. Located primarily in malls, ERCs serve students who have been unsuccessful in the traditional setting for reasons such as teen pregnancy, truancy, lack of motivation different learning styles, issues with high student-to-teacher ratios, or social-interaction problems.

ERCs are not designed to be harder or easier than traditional high schools, just different in approach. While every student at North Coast Academy must pass Ohio’s requirements for graduation, small class sizes enable students to seek one-on-one assistance, on-line academic software allows students to work at their own pace and class days are shorter, to accommodate students with additional responsibilities. Despite



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serving an at-risk student body, North Coast Academy boasts an 80 percent graduation rate and 278 students have earned their high school diplomas at the ERC.

“Simon Youth Foundation could not be more pleased about the collaboration with Sears Holdings to offer the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County with a state-of-the-art facility,” said SYF Executive Vice President, Dr. Richard Markoff. “The traditional school setting doesn’t work for every student, so our goal is to help the districts offer them the personalized attention they need in order to succeed in high school and throughout their lives.”

Carolyn Brown, community advocate and wife of Cleveland Cavaliers Head Coach Mike Brown, will be present to help the school celebrate its opening.

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Simon Youth Foundation, established in 1998, exists to foster and improve educational opportunities, career development, and life skills that transform the lives of at-risk youth through focused programs and initiatives with our public school and post secondary education partners. SYF accomplishes its mission through two initiatives: alternative schools called Education Resource Centers and a post-secondary scholarship program. Its 23 ERCs have graduated more than 5,000 students at an 90 percent rate, and more than \$5.9 million has been awarded in post-secondary scholarships.

Sears Holdings Corporation is the nation's fourth largest broadline retailer with over \$50 billion in annual revenues and approximately 3,800 full-line and specialty retail stores in the United States and Canada. Sears Holdings is the leading home appliance retailer as well as a leader in tools, lawn and garden, home electronics and automotive repair and maintenance. Key proprietary brands include Kenmore, Craftsman and DieHard, and a broad apparel offering, including such well-known labels as Lands' End, Jaclyn Smith and Joe Boxer, as well as the Apostrophe and Covington brands. It also has Martha Stewart Everyday products, which are offered exclusively in the U.S. by Kmart and in Canada by Sears Canada. The company is the nation's largest provider of home services, with more than 13 million service calls made annually. For more information, visit Sears Holdings' website at www.searsholdings.com.

The Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County is a regional service center that provides assistance to districts and offers a broad range of resources. The service center enables the ERC to serve students from Beachwood City School District, Chagrin Falls Exempted Village School District, Cleveland Heights/University Heights City School District, Euclid City School District, Garfield Heights City School District, Mayfield City School District, Nardon Hills City School District, Orange City School District, Richmond Heights Local School District, Solon City School District, Shaker Heights City School District, South Euclid/Lyndhurst City School District, Twinsburg City School District.