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THRIVE BY FIVE WASHINGTON ANNOUNCES NEW AND RE-ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

SEATTLE – During its annual meeting today, Thrive by Five Washington welcomed four new members to its Board of Directors. Thrive is the state's non-profit public-private partnership for early learning.

Named to the board were **Valorie Johnson**, program director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation; **Dr. David Sanders**, executive vice president, Casey Family Programs; **Katie Simmons**, executive director, Talaris Institute; and **State Rep. Maureen Walsh**, R-16, Walla Walla.

The board also re-elected five members to a second term: **Tony Benton**, director of community affairs, Clear Channel Communications, Inc.; **Jackie Bezos**, president, Bezos Family Foundation; **Kim Ackerley Cleworth**, president and executive director, Ginger and Barry Ackerley Foundation; **Ricardo Garcia**, community volunteer, Yakima Valley; and state **Senate Minority Leader Mike Hewitt**, R-16, Walla Walla.

Key work for Thrive includes:

- working closely with the state Department of Early Learning and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to lead the creation of a statewide early learning system that supports children from birth to third grade. (The three organizations are leading the development of a new statewide Early Learning Plan that will be released in September 2010.);
- overseeing the state's new Home Visiting Services Account, created by the Legislature to match public and private dollars to fund proven and promising home visiting programs throughout the state; and
- launching a campaign to help parents better understand why the first years of life are so important and how they can best support their children.

The Thrive by Five Washington Board of Directors currently has 23 members, including four legislators representing both parties and both houses of the Legislature, and three ex-officio members: the governor, state superintendent of public instruction and director of the state Department of Early Learning. Members serve three-year terms.

Johnson, Sanders, Simmons and Walsh join an active and committed board of state, community, business and philanthropic leaders, many of whom helped create Thrive almost five years ago. The board is currently co-chaired by Gov. Christine Gregoire and Jackie Bezos of the Bezos Family Foundation. Nina Auerbach is president & CEO of Thrive by Five Washington.

Thrive's officers for FY11 are:

- *President & CEO*: Nina Auerbach, Thrive by Five Washington
- *Co-Chair*: Jackie Bezos, Bezos Family Foundation
- *Co-Chair*: Gov. Christine Gregoire
- *Past Chair*: William H. Gates Sr., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

- *Vice-President:* State Rep. Ruth Kagi, chair of the House Family & Child Services Committee
- *Vice-President:* Bob Watt, community volunteer
- *Treasurer:* Kevin C. Washington, Tabor 100
- *Secretary:* Kim Ackerley Cleworth, Ginger and Barry Ackerley Foundation

For a full board list: <http://www.thrivebyfivewa.org/boardofdirectors.html>

About Thrive by Five Washington

Started in 2006 by Washington state businesses and foundations, Thrive by Five Washington is the state's nonprofit public-private partnership in early learning. Thrive mobilizes the statewide commitment to early learning by raising public awareness about the importance of early learning for all children birth to age 5; identifying and driving proven programs, best practices and promising models across the state; and collaborating with early learning and K-12 partners to build an early learning system that helps families and caregivers give their children the best start in school and life possible. For more information about Thrive by Five Washington: www.thrivebyfivewa.org

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