



Born Into Poverty, Graduates of *MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL*® Break the Cycle of Hardship and Exceed National Averages for Philanthropy, Volunteerism and Education

(Hershey, PA, Aug 25, 2009) – A new report assessing the impact of a relatively small group of individuals reveals that they are responsible for:

- As much as \$9,800,000 in donations per year to charitable causes
- Direct employment of up to 146,000 people throughout the United States
- Delivering as many as 457,000 hours of volunteer time per year

What would you say if you knew many people from this group:

- Hail from homes at or below the poverty level.
- Come from single parent homes (79%) or have a parent in jail (40%).
- Are being raised by extended family members because their own parents are unable to care for them (16%).
- Are raised in a family environment where there are mental health (42%) or drug/alcohol-related (57%) issues.
- Have experienced tremendous instability educationally, with 43% having attended at least three and as many as six or more schools prior to being admitted to the school they graduated from.

The group in question is the 6,800 living graduates of the *MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL*® (MHS). MHS is the legacy of Milton Hershey, who founded the world famous chocolate company that bears his name, and his wife Catherine. For 100 years, MHS has been giving children in need access to a first-rate education and a nurturing environment, one that enables graduates to live productive, fulfilling lives and make a profound impact on communities across the country.

Marking the School's centennial, *A Legacy of Opportunity Shared: Measuring the Impact of MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL* is the first ever study of Mr. Hershey's legacy that assesses the impact of the school's living graduates. The report outlines the significant contributions of the school to the educational and social development of its graduates and how they have seized upon the opportunities provided there to make outsized contributions to society. Today, the school has a total enrollment of more than 1,800 students from across the country, all of whom come from extreme financial and social need.

The new study clearly illustrates a graduate base that goes on to have a profound impact on society in four significant areas:

- **Create a Positive Economic Impact:** Graduates live productive lives, create jobs and raise generations of children who further contribute to society, thus breaking the cycle of poverty.

- **Help Communities:** Alumni demonstrate deep social consciousness by volunteering their time and contributing financially to communities in need at levels far beyond national standards. The average alumnus donates \$1,438 annually versus the national average of \$1,000.¹
- **Mentor and Educate:** The type of mentoring and respect students received from staff and educators at MHS is passed on to others with amazing results.
- **Pass the Benefit to Future Generations:** they raise children and influence grandchildren to embrace education, do unto others and leave the world a better place, as they were taught.

“It would have been enough to improve on the dismal dropout rates that face children from profound economic need,” said Dr. Anthony Colistra, a 1959 graduate and President of MHS. “But these alumni have created hundreds of thousands of jobs; contributed millions of dollars to causes that help those in need; put others first by volunteering countless hours to the betterment of society; and, raised children and grandchildren with social and educational values that drive success. They have not only fundamentally transformed their lives but have significantly impacted the lives of countless others. Their contributions – to families, communities and society in general – while measurable in dollars are immeasurable in value.”

As the study has shown, MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL alumni leave this small community in Pennsylvania to influence communities throughout the United States and several countries around the world. Consider the considerable achievements of MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL graduates who responded to the survey:²

- They contribute up to \$1,742,000 per year to charitable organizations – extrapolated to 6,800 living alumni; multiple millions of dollars have been donated to organizations from faith-based charities to civic groups by those that received the benefits of a MHS education.
- Respondents have created up to 17,420 jobs throughout the country...and their brethren so many more.
- Every year more than 20,300 people are directly impacted by philanthropic activities performed by those MHS graduates who responded to the survey.
- Ninety percent of MHS graduates pursued some form of higher education or training.

“For these graduates, and we believe future graduates, MHS has been the agent of change,” said Dr. Colistra. “Their experience at the School enabled them to impact the world around them in ways that often exceed the experiences of children raised in ‘average’ circumstances and are astounding in the context of a childhood rooted in poverty. Milton Hershey’s legacy is indeed alive and well, not only through The Hershey Company but also through MHS.”

¹ “A nation of givers,” The American, Arthur C. Brooks, March 31, 2008, as posted to www.charitynavigator.org.

² The results from the alumni survey were extrapolated to assess the overall impact of the approximately 6,800 living alumni of MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL. The figures for charitable donations, employment and volunteerism cited at the top of the release were extrapolated from actual survey results.

Visit www.thehersheylegacy.com for the complete report and more information about The Hershey Legacy celebration.

About the Study

The report is a comprehensive first-ever analyses of the School's positive impact on the lives of its graduates and their subsequent positive effect on society at-large. Through a survey and individual interviews of graduates from 1935 through 2008, an independent consulting firm evaluated how experiences at the School influenced living alumni's individual contributions to society through family and community, professional and vocational contributions, military service, community service through volunteerism, philanthropy, environmentalism, and contributions to sports, arts and culture. The results show MHS's long history as a change agent for children who were statistically at risk to grow into a life of poverty. Most educational institutes are justifiably proud of their students' academic achievements, but the School's legacy of success is realized when student accomplishments permeate future generations in measurable ways from job creation to philanthropy to commitment to volunteerism in numbers that surpass national averages.

About MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL

MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL is a cost-free, private, coeducational home and school for children from families of low income, limited resources, and social need. The School is funded by a trust established by Milton S. Hershey and his wife Catherine. MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL offers a positive, structured home life year-round and an excellent pre-kindergarten through 12th grade education. Our vision focuses on building character and providing children with the skills necessary to be successful in all aspects of life.

About The Hershey Company

The Hershey Company (NYSE: HSY) is the largest producer of quality chocolate in North America and a global leader in chocolate and sugar confectionery. Headquartered in Hershey, Pa., The Hershey Company has operations throughout the world and more than 12,000 employees. With revenues of more than \$5 billion, Hershey offers such iconic brands as *Hershey's*, *Reese's*, *Hershey's Kisses*, *Kit Kat*, *Twizzlers* and *Ice Breakers* as well as the smooth, creamy indulgence of *Hershey's Bliss* chocolates. Hershey is a leader in the fast-growing dark and premium chocolate segment, with such brands as *Hershey's Special Dark* and *Hershey's Extra Dark*. In addition, Artisan Confections Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Hershey Company, markets such premium chocolate offerings as *Scharffen Berger* and *Dagoba*. For more than 100 years, The Hershey Company has been a leader in making a positive difference in the communities where we live, work and do business. The Milton Hershey School, established by the company's founder in 1909, provides a nurturing environment, quality education, housing, and medical care at no cost to children in social and financial need. The School is administered by the Hershey Trust Company, Hershey's largest shareholder, making the students of Milton Hershey School direct beneficiaries of Hershey's success. Please visit us at www.hersheys.com.

For The Hershey Company

Jody Cook

717.534.4288

jcook@hersheys.com

or

Ciara Randolph

201.231.6034

crandolph@mww.com

For Milton Hershey School

Connie McNamara

717.520.2212

McNamaraC@mhs-pa.org