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The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool Adds School Garden to the Smart Love Play-Based Curriculum

Chicago, IL – The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool is enriching its student’s educational experience by planting and cultivating a garden in the school’s expansive yard. With this new feature added to the preschool grounds, Smart Love will introduce yet another opportunity for play-based experiences to enrich learning in math, natural and social sciences, reading, language, personal expression, physical development, nutrition and growth. The gardening program and accompanying curriculum satisfies the Preschool’s goal of offering preschoolers a nature curriculum, which is unique among preschools in Chicago.

Urban Agriculturalist Billy Burdett, who has experience teaching preschoolers, will manage the garden and help develop a curriculum with the teachers. Hands-on learning in the garden and the season-extending greenhouse as well as in the classroom (seeds starts, worm bed, and garden activities) will take place all year long. As children work together to create, maintain and understand their school garden, they will be exposed to concepts such as symbiotic relationships of plants and animals, solar energy, plant lifecycles, photosynthesis, cooperation, environmental stewardship and ecological awareness.

“We are so thankful to our generous families and neighbors who made this project a reality,” says Carolyn Stolper Friedman, Executive Director of Smart Love. “This garden will provide a wonderful and effective learning environment for the children.”

Growing and maintaining The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool garden will require continued care and ongoing financial support. Smart Love received a generous matching gift of up to \$7,500 from one preschool family to initiate the project. Families, neighbors and organizations interested in supporting this unique initiative at The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool can contact Carolyn Stolper Friedman at carolyn.friedman@smartlovefamily.org for information about plant sponsorships, donations, volunteer opportunities and grants.

For more information about Smart Love Preschool please call Kelly Perez at 773.665.8052, ext. 1 or email her at Kelly.Perez@smarlovefamily.org or visit online at www.smartlovepreschool.org.

The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool is based on the Smart Love philosophy which was developed by two highly respected experts, Martha Heineman Pieper, Ph.D. and William J. Pieper, M.D. The preschool provides a setting that promotes children's long-term academic success by strengthening children's social and emotional health and inspiring their intellectual creativity through play-based learning. Supported by the latest child development research, Smart Love has been successfully applied by trained professionals in a broad range of settings for over three decades. For more information please visit www.smartlovepreschool.org.