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**2010 TACO BELL COLLEGE TOUR INSPIRES HIGHER ED POSSIBILITIES IN INNER CITY STUDENTS;
GIVES STUDENTS A CHANCE TO CHECK OUT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

March 14-19 trip makes a run towards the boarder; will tour Texas and Arkansas schools

NASHVILLE, Tenn., (March 13, 2010) – Fourteen year old Ashlee, a freshman at East Literature Magnet School in Nashville, and an active member of the Andrew Jackson Boys & Girls Club, has already made up her mind. She'll go to college, but where and what to study... business or education? Fortunately, she's been involved in a special program that very early on has underscored the importance – and the possibilities – of a college education. She might not know it, but putting that idea squarely in her mind has probably made all the difference in the world for her future.

This coming Sunday evening the teen will join approximately 40 other Nashville area student members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee (BGCMT) (www.bgcmt.org) as they board a 2010 Taco Bell College Tour bus to visit prospective colleges and universities in Texas and Arkansas as participants in the 2010 Taco Bell College Tour.

From March 14-19, the inner city youths will visit the colleges as a part of an innovative program that exposes young people with limited resources to not only the idea of college, but college campuses outside of Middle Tennessee, an effort meant to encourage them to stay in school and graduate. Seventy percent of the kids served by BGCMT come from families making less than \$25,000 per year.

Taco Bell, which has a similar focus through its Taco Bell Foundation for Teens (www.tacobellfoundation.org) to inspire teenagers to graduate from high school and become educated, engaged and productive adults, is joining with the Boys & Girls Club of Middle Tennessee to sponsor this year's tour.

“For most inner city youths, the thought of attending college is only a distant possibility, simply because of their economic realities,” said Bobby Lee Smith, president and CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Middle Tennessee. “We created this College Tour program in 2000 to demonstrate that a college degree – and the better life that it can bring – can truly become a reality for them if they work and study hard, stay in school and graduate. And with a company like Taco Bell behind them, helping make college visits possible, a far brighter future is within their grasp.”

According to a recent study (<http://tacobellfoundationforteens.org/TeenDropoutCrisis.htm>):

- Every 26 seconds a teen drops out of school or fails to graduate on time – representing 1.2 million students, more than half of whom are from minority groups.
- Dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to be unemployed, in poor health, living in poverty or on public assistance.
- Additionally, if those students who dropped out in 2008 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$319 billion in income over their lifetimes.

To combat these statistics, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee ten years ago began taking selected students to tour campuses throughout the United States to give them a taste of the college experience. More than 225 local youths have visited colleges in Washington D.C., Maryland, North Carolina, Central Ohio, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama on ten previous trips.

“Taco Bell truly believes in youth and knows that by providing teens hands-on experiences that expand their view of the world and helps them see the possibilities a college education brings, youths can become motivated to avoid the pitfalls that come from dropping

out of school,” said Farzin Ferdowsi, Nashville, Tennessee Taco Bell franchisee. “We want to help teens any way we can and we think the concept of this program is an excellent one. We’re hopeful we can really impact teens’ lives here.”

Boys & Girls Club member students can volunteer for the tour, but must undergo a rigorous, weeks-long series of classes on career exploration, graduation goals, standardized test taking, researching colleges, completing university applications, resume writing, interviewing skills, financial aid, money management and short- and long-term goal setting. They must also commit to keep a journal throughout their experience and pay \$50 towards their trip. (No young person is refused the opportunity to participate due to inability to pay, however.)

Most of the participants live in the Andrew Jackson, Vine Hill, Preston Taylor, and John Henry Hale Homes in Nashville.

The 2010 tour will visit Paul Quinn College, the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas A&M, Rice University, Texas Southern University, Houston Baptist University in the Dallas, College Station and Houston areas and Philander Smith College in Little Rock, AR. During their visit they will get a tour of the campus and dorms, and discuss admissions and the scholarship process with experts. They will also have some free time to visit interesting sites along the way, such as NASA Johnson Space Center and the Clinton Presidential Library.

“When you see things for yourself, it makes a lot of difference than when you merely see it on the computer or hear it from others,” Ashlee said. “I’m really excited to go on the trip. I want a college that will help me decide as I go into a career.”

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee

Founded in 1903, Boys & Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee (BGCMT) is an organization whose purpose is to promote the social, education, health, leadership and character development of boys and girls during critical periods of their growth. We provide a safe place to learn and grow; ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals; life-enhancing programs and character development experiences; along with hope and opportunity. We have five locations serving over 3,500 youth per year. We operate in Davidson and Williamson Counties and are affiliated with the national Boys & Girls Clubs of America. For additional information about BGCMT, visit www.bgcmt.org or call 615-833-2368.

About Taco Bell/MRCO

Taco Bell Corp. ("Taco Bell"), a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc., (NYSE: YUM), is the nation's leading Mexican-style quick service restaurant chain. Taco Bell serves tacos, burritos, signature quesadillas and other specialty items to more than 36.8 million consumers each week in nearly 5,600 restaurants in the U.S. Established in 2001, privately held MRCO is the largest franchiser of Taco Bell Restaurants in Middle Tennessee.

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