



For Immediate Release

Contact:

Nicole Sammartino
Marketing Coordinator
(978) 291-0256 ext. 35
nsammartino@littlesprouts.com

Susan Leger-Ferraro awarded U.S. Small Business Administration's 2010 Massachusetts Woman in Business Champion award

Boston-February 16th, 2010 – Susan Leger-Ferraro, founder and president of Little Sprouts early childhood education schools, with 11 locations in Massachusetts, has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2010 Massachusetts Woman in Business Champion award winner. This announcement was made by Robert H. Nelson, Massachusetts SBA District Director. Ms. Leger-Ferraro was nominated for this award by Joe Bevilacqua, president of the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The Women in Business Champion award is presented annually to an individual or individuals who have fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of women's business ownership.

This award will give Susan the opportunity to influence President Obama's agenda on small business development and early childhood education.

"In looking over Susan's credentials, she should be getting an award not just for Women in Business Champion but rather "champion of champions", because she helps and develops people and communities in many ways throughout the state in addition to her tremendous efforts on behalf of women entrepreneurs," said SBA Director Nelson.

"It is an honor to receive such an acknowledgement from the United States Small Business Administration for work that has improved the lives of so many", said Leger-Ferraro. "The 2010 Massachusetts Woman in Business Champion award will bring the light of awareness to all the human and civil rights initiatives we have championed for so many years."

Susan is founder and champion to several award-winning businesses including Little Sprouts, ImagineThat, and the Leadership and Literacy Foundation.

Little Sprouts Inc. has received the prestigious US Dept. of Education Early Reading First Preschools Centers of Excellence Award 3 times. It is the only for-profit early education provider in the nation to receive this national recognition. Little Sprouts schools are also accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children; a status obtained by less than 8% of early education schools.

- MORE -

ImagineThat, founded in 2004 by Leger-Ferraro, is an interactive, indoor educational play space. Imagine That partners with WGBH's Award-Winning PBS series Between The Lions, and Peep in the Big Wide World as well as, FUNdamentals of Music and Movement. ImagineThat offers workshops, birthday parties, parent support groups, play groups and exploratory fun for children of all ages and stages. ImagineThat was also voted the "2009 Favorite Indoor Play Space" by Boston Parent Paper.

Leger-Ferraro is also the President of the Leadership and Literacy Foundation which offers free, reduced consultant work for women and minorities in business seeking grants. The Foundation also provides training on multiple organizational development topics.

Leger-Ferraro Leadership and Literacy Foundation creates leadership and entrepreneur opportunities for at-risk teens by way of Project STRIVE, Pathways and Connect. These projects, created in 1998, include a GED and leadership program for at-risk teens that have dropped out of high school in the greater Merrimack Valley. The teens that are chosen for the programs must meet low income, residency, and employment barriers and want to better themselves in all aspects of life.

Leger-Ferraro also works with woman and minority business owners and designs business plans for them to ensure access to much-needed capital. She is also a business partner of Next Street Financial which is a merchant bank that serves inner city small businesses countrywide that show potential for growth and success. This partnership provides business owners with financial help and advice that enables them to achieve their goals.

Leger-Ferraro studied under the direction of Stephen Covey, Deepak Chopra and David Simon and is Facilitator Certified in the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and Creating Health and travels nationally to train people from all walks of life in these techniques. She has facilitated this training for businesses, high school students, business partners and sister schools of Little Sprouts.

Ms. Leger-Ferraro will be honored along with nine other small business award winners, at an awards luncheon in Worcester in the spring.

MORE

Little Sprouts has provided award-winning early education and child care for over 27 years in the Greater Merrimack Valley and Boston. Little Sprouts preschoolers score in the top 4% in independent early literacy assessments as compared to other schools. Little Sprouts is a group of humanitarians, we trust in the power of literacy to change the world; social, emotional, intellectual and physical literacy for children, youth, teachers and families. We believe in the commonality in humanity. We embrace that unity is best achieved by celebrating diversity. Little Sprouts has 11 schools in Massachusetts supporting families that reflect 56 cultures speaking 23 languages from all walks of social, economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

###