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Doorways to Dreams Fund (D2D)
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ENTERTAINMENT APPROACH TO FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKS TO REVERSE DEBT CULTURE

“Celebrity Calamity” Video Game Shows Strong Appeal for Single Moms

BOSTON, MA—Feb. 13, 2009—Doorways to Dreams Fund (D2D) launched today its new financial literacy video game, *Celebrity Calamity* (www.celebritycalamity.com), to help address concerns about high personal debt levels in the US.

“We’re using the idea of video games, a market that is exploding, to reach out to low and middle income Americans to teach good credit habits in a fun and engaging manner,” said Nick Maynard, Director of Innovation and New Product Development with D2D.

The game’s premise involves serving as business manager for three capricious celebrities—Jessica Albudget, Buster Buyin, and Missy Moolah. Navigating the world of debit and credit cards unsuccessfully will get the player fired, while successful money management exposes players to increasingly challenging financial situations. “The connection to financial literacy becomes apparent when our test audience, low-income single moms, starts playing,” said Maynard. “Although *Celebrity Calamity* just looks like a fun game, we are quickly seeing a sharpened understanding of APR and finance charges among players in preliminary testing.”

Peter Tufano, Harvard Business School professor and co-founder of D2D, conceived of gaming as an innovative way to help consumers make better decisions about their money, taking cues from business and entertainment. “Working people don’t have the time or inclination to enroll in financial education classes. D2D’s vision of ‘financial entertainment’ will appeal to those who lack the financial knowledge needed to avoid over-indebtedness, the high cost of borrowing, and financial behavior that leads to high fees,” said Tufano. “*Celebrity Calamity* is the first in a series of video games being developed to address this need in a modern, effective way.”

“One of the most interesting facts to emerge from our research is that lower-income single mothers were very enthusiastic game players,” said Ben Katz, Game Designer at Enspire Learning, who developed the game. “Balancing financial skills instruction with an enjoyable experience was our key goal.”

Celebrity Calamity was developed with and for low-to-moderate income women 18 to 32, and has been tested with D2D partners in Austin, TX, Tulsa, OK, and Providence, RI. These preliminary tests revealed increases of 15 to 30 percent in financial skills self-confidence along with consistently high ratings for game fun.

“Now is the time for financial entertainment,” commented Tufano. “I look forward to the development and release of more games and digital media designed to help Americans recover from problems resulting from the damaging debt culture of the last decade.”

Celebrity Calamity was made possible by a generous grant from The Wal-Mart Foundation.

About Doorways to Dreams Fund (D2D Fund)

The non-profit D2D Fund (www.d2dfund.org) is a national organization seeking to expand access to financial services, especially asset building opportunities, for low-income families by creating, testing and deploying innovative financial products and services. D2D works with the financial services industry, national non-profit groups, grassroots community agencies, and public policy organizations to generate promising ideas, pilot test systems and programs, build awareness of the needs and potential of low-income communities, and advocate progressive social and economic policy.

About Enspire Learning

Founded in 2001, Enspire Learning (www.enspire.com) is an award-winning provider of serious games, simulations, and custom e-learning solutions. By combining instructional and graphical design expertise, the company's work inspires and motivates, leading learners to retain, internalize, and apply knowledge more effectively.

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