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Eighth Winner Announced in Annual Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition

Teenager from the foster care system advocates for rights of children

All eight winners to present at the TEDxYSE event on Nov. 13 in DC

ARLINGTON, Va. — Oct. 14, 2010— [Ashoka](#), the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs, and [Staples](#), Inc. (NASDAQ: SPLS), announced today the eighth winner in the [Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur \(YSE\) Competition](#). The final winner in the competition, 17-year-old Heather Wilder, is a Las Vegas teen working as an advocate for the rights of children in foster care, through her organization, Fostering Kids at Work. The global competition recognizes youth-led organizations addressing social issues affecting their communities, and is part of Ashoka's [Youth Venture](#)[®], an initiative that identifies and fosters young entrepreneurs all over the world to become changemakers who are creating positive change.

All eight winners of the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition will receive cash prizes, consulting from Staples executives and an all-expenses-paid trip to speak at TEDxYSE, a Youth Venture-hosted conference held at Sidwell Friends in Washington, DC on Nov. 13. TEDxYSE leverages the global TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) conference model, which enables local community groups to organize, design and host their own independent, TED-like events. Actor James Cromwell will be the opening speaker at the event. For more information, please visit <http://www.tedxse.com>. Tickets for the event are available at <http://www.tedxse.com/register>.

Heather Wilder is a passionate advocate for the rights of foster care children. She speaks with a conviction and clarity that can only come from having lived the experience herself. Heather was removed from an abusive situation as a young child. After several years in the foster care system, she was adopted into a loving and supportive family at age 12.

“When I became adopted, I wanted to make sure that other foster kids had a better understanding of the things that were happening to them as a foster child,” Heather said.

To help foster kids in the system, Heather wrote a series of booklets that address issues faced by foster children on a daily basis – like moving homes frequently, not being adopted, or dealing with previous and sometimes ongoing abusive situations. Social workers give her booklets to children as they come into the

foster care system, and the booklets have also been distributed to mental health clinics, group homes, children's hospitals, and military magnet schools. While speaking directly to youth about challenging issues, the writings also help adults understand foster care programs through the eyes of a teenager that has experienced them firsthand.

"The booklets are written to educate adults, and provide youth encouragement and hope," she said. "It can be difficult to speak about abuse, but being brave helps me feel better. My hope is that it also gives those that haven't shared their stories yet the encouragement to do so."

In addition to her booklets, Heather has worked tirelessly to improve the situation of other foster kids in Nevada. She leads an annual holiday toy drive which has collected more than 8,000 toys for local children in a foster care program. She's also held scrapbook workshops, which help kids who don't have baby pictures of their own to begin creating memories through pictures from recent years up to their current age.

"I hope to scale my program further to reach more foster care children around the country," said Heather. "I want to make sure that foster kids are important to more people than just the social workers. I want them to have hope and know that people do care about them."

"By leading the organization Fostering Kids at Work and sharing her experiences through her writing to help others, Heather Wilder is creating a positive, lasting impact on youth," said Paul Capelli, vice president of community and public relations. "Heather's courage to be the voice of youth in foster care is inspiring and she serves as a model of ingenuity we hope others will embrace to lead their own social cause."

The Staples/Ashoka YSE competition is open to existing and new Youth Venture teams, which are made up of young people between the ages of 12 and 24, who are creating entrepreneurial ventures that make a positive impact on communities. Nominations and entries were accepted on a rolling basis through Sept. 30, 2010. For additional information on the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition, please visit <http://www.genv.net/en-us/staples-yse>.

Ashoka's Youth Venture[®] engages over 75,000 young people in pursuing their dreams to create change in 18 countries around the world. Since its founding in 1996, Youth Venture has launched nearly 4,000 Venture teams worldwide – one-third of which have launched as a direct result of SFFL's five-year partnership with Ashoka. SFFL's commitment to supporting Ashoka's vision of Everyone A Changemaker[™] has been instrumental in expanding Youth Venture's offerings and opportunities to help young people, like Heather Wilder, create positive change. Since 2006, [Staples Foundation for Learning](#), the charitable arm of Staples, Inc., has enabled Youth Venture to expand to eight countries in North America, South America and Europe through more than \$2.5 million in funding.

About Youth Venture

Ashoka's Youth Venture aims to help an entire generation of young people develop as changemakers, who will improve their communities now and throughout their lives. Youth Venture inspires and supports teams of young people to launch and lead their own civic-minded organizations and businesses. Youth teams access workshops, tools, adult allies, a global network of like-minded young changemakers and seed funding to establish their own ventures that solve problems around them. Youth Venture was created by Ashoka, the global pioneer of the social entrepreneurship sector and the world's biggest network of changemakers. We believe that the greatest contribution we can make to the world is to increase dramatically the number of changemakers today and in every future generation. This is the key factor for success for every part of society, from a school to a company to an entire country. Ashoka's Youth Venture operates in 18 countries and online at www.GenV.net.

About Ashoka

Ashoka is the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs—individuals with innovative and practical ideas for addressing social needs. Working with these social entrepreneurs, Ashoka builds communities of innovators who work collectively to transform society and design new ways for the social sector to become more productive, entrepreneurial and globally integrated. For more information, please visit www.ashoka.org.

About Staples

Staples, the world's largest office products company, is committed to making it easy for customers to buy a wide range of office products and services. Our broad selection of office supplies, electronics, technology and office furniture as well as business services, including computer repair and copying and printing, helps our customers run their offices efficiently. With 2009 sales of \$24 billion and 91,000 associates worldwide, Staples operates in 26 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia serving businesses of all sizes and consumers. Staples invented the office superstore concept in 1986 and today ranks second worldwide in e-commerce sales. The company is headquartered outside Boston. More information about Staples (Nasdaq: SPLS) is available at www.staples.com/media.

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