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Ashoka and Staples Launch Annual Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition

Global Competition Will Recognize Entrepreneurial Youth Addressing Social Issues in their Communities

ARLINGTON, VA — March 25, 2009— Ashoka, the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs, and Staples Foundation for Learning (SFFL), a private foundation created by Staples, Inc. (NASDAQ: SPLS), announced today the launch of the third annual Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition. The global competition is part of Ashoka's Youth Venture, an initiative that SFFL has helped expand globally to seven countries in North America, South America and Europe. Youth Venture identifies and fosters young entrepreneurs all over the world who are identifying problems and creating Ventures to address social issues in their communities.

The competition asks Youth Venture teams, which are made up of students between the ages of 12-24, to explain what course of action they have taken to address a social issue affecting their community.

Nominations will be accepted through April 17, 2009. In May, an elite panel of judges will select five finalist Venture teams for their outstanding impact, innovation and potential. Selected members of each team will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Boston in late June and be recognized at Youth Venture's National Summit where they will be joined by hundreds of fellow young changemakers. The Summit will provide youth with innovative workshops on skill-building, leadership and collaborative opportunities.

At the awards ceremony, the overall winning team will be announced and presented with the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Excellence Award and a prize worth \$5,000. The four remaining winning teams will receive Achievement Awards and prizes of \$500. Following the ceremony, all five teams will have the unique opportunity to consult with, and draw from the expertise of high-level Staples executives at their global headquarters. During this information sharing session, teams will discuss their individual projects with a panel of experienced business and management professionals. Winners will also meet with an Ashoka Fellow - one of the world's leading social entrepreneurs. Ashoka Fellows are known for their unrivaled commitment to bold ideas and innovative solutions.

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In 2006, SFFL began its support of Youth Venture and has since helped Ashoka launch the Youth Venture program in France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Canada, Argentina and Brazil, and expand program offerings in the United States. To date, SFFL has contributed \$2 million to build the capacity, visibility and reach of the Youth Venture program throughout the world.

Ashoka's Youth Venture[®] serves thousands of youth in 17 countries around the world. Since its founding in 1996, Youth Venture has launched over 3,000 Venture Teams worldwide – one-third of which have launched as a direct result of SFFL's four-year partnership with Ashoka. SFFL's commitment to supporting Ashoka's vision of Everyone A Changemaker[™] has been instrumental in expanding Youth Venture's program internationally, fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of young leaders in seven countries.

For additional information on the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition, please visit the competition web site at: www.GenV.net/StaplesYV

About Youth Venture

Ashoka's Youth Venture[®] is a global movement of young changemakers. Youth Venture inspires and invests in teams of young people to start their own sustainable social Ventures and connects them into a powerful global network. Collectively, these young changemakers are redefining the youth years as a time of initiative and positive change. For more information, please visit 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, including supplies, technology, furniture, and business services. With 2008 sales of \$23 billion and 91,000 associates worldwide, Staples serves businesses of all sizes and consumers in 27 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. In July 2008, Staples acquired Corporate Express, one of the world's leading suppliers of office products to businesses and institutions. Staples invented the office superstore concept in 1986 and is headquartered outside Boston. More information about Staples (Nasdaq: SPLS) is available at www.staples.com.

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