

Final – For Immediate Release

BIRDS NEST FOUNDATION TO DONATE ACADEMIC GARDENS TO 100 NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

‘Ground Up Campaign’ to Educate City Students About Nutrition and the Environment While Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

NEW YORK – May 9, 2011 – [Birds Nest Foundation](#) (Birds Nest), a 501(c)3 organization founded to provide services to other non-profit organizations, today announced it has donated edible, *academic gardens* to 100 public schools throughout the New York City boroughs. Birds Nest Founder and CEO Avis Richards, in partnership with [The United States of Food](#)’s “Ground Up Campaign,” is kicking off the initiative **today** with an academic garden planting event at **P.S. 86 Kingsbridge Heights in the Bronx at 9:30 a.m.**

“We are very excited to provide an opportunity for students to learn about and participate in the process of growing food naturally to teach healthy eating habits,” says Richards. “The ‘Ground Up Campaign’ is an important initiative in promoting healthy lifestyles – in and outside of the home – starting at a young age to instill these values for a lifetime.”

The United States of Food Founding Partner Shane Emmett states: “It’s tough to comprehend nutrition until you grow your own food. One garden at time can make a difference, but Avis’ vision to provide 100 academic gardens to public schools has the power to create a movement.”

Through Birds Nest Foundation and the “Ground Up Campaign,” 100 New York City schools throughout all five boroughs will receive an *academic garden* developed by The United States of Food, which is waist-high and includes a unique mixture of organic gardening soil and accompanying nutrients. The gardens will be planted in classrooms throughout 2011, and will grow to bear vegetables for students to enjoy during the school year, while learning about the process of food from seed to table.

New York City Council Speaker [Christine Quinn](#) is a supporter of teaching children about healthy eating and where our food comes from as she believes it is just as valuable as teaching them how to read and write. “Thanks to groups like Avis Richards’ Birds Nest Foundation, we are educating more and more New York City children everyday about the importance of nutritious eating and how

and where to grow their own healthy food,” said Quinn. “Through our FoodWorks New York initiative, the Council has been working to use our food system to create jobs, promote public health, and protect the environment. We look forward to continued partnership on community gardens efforts, and on all of our efforts to help New Yorkers eat healthier.”

Stephen Ritz, an educator in the Bronx at Discovery High School, a participating school in the Ground Up Campaign states: "locally grown food should be an essential and integral part of NYC's citywide initiative as Discovery HS / Green Bronx Machine and Birds Nest stand ready and able to export our green thumb throughout the city to positively impact the current and future generations."

This Campaign is just one of several initiatives Richards has launched through Birds Nest to promote nutrition and health. Richards is the producer of a documentary called LUNCH which examines the causes and consequences of "growing up in a junk-food culture." In October 2010, this documentary was turned into a public TV series, LunchNYC broadcast by NYC Media and supported by the NYC Mayor's office to further investigate healthy food options and initiatives throughout the city.

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For more information about Birds Nest Foundation, please visit www.birdsnestfoundation.org.

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