



Parents for
Choice in Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Special Need Voucher Program Grows Beyond Expectations
More children served each year**

Salt Lake City, UT — July 6, 2007 — Utah's broadest voucher program may be on hold pending voter approval, but another of Utah's voucher programs is growing far beyond expectations benefiting hundreds of children each year.

The Carson Smith Special Needs Scholarship, a law Parents for Choice in Education (PCE) lobbied for, provides students with special needs a state-funded voucher for private school tuition.

Utah State Office of Education Specialist, Travis Rawlings, says, "The Utah State Office of Education was pleasantly surprised by the number of new schools that applied, and we are greatly appreciative of Parents for Choice in Education's effort in informing schools about the program and helping schools through the application process."

This upcoming school year there will be 40 private schools and close to 500 students participating in the Carson Smith Scholarship program. This reflects an amazing growth of 500% and 402% respectively, since Governor Huntsman signed it into effect in 2005.

Michelle Roberts, whose son has been attending private school, U Can Learn, with a Carson Smith voucher, is pleased with the benefits it provides her son. "My son has never been happier or felt more successful," she said. "It feels wonderful as a parent to know that my child is in a setting that really works well for him."

"This is all made possible by the Carson Smith Scholarship," she said.

"This program has real benefits for children with unique needs," said Kristi Saunders, Carson Smith Scholarship Outreach Coordinator with Parents for Choice in Education. PCE recognized that some parents and private school administrators might need help navigating the application process, so it hired Saunders, who has a daughter with a hearing impairment, to help parents and private school principals participate in the program.

"Programs like the Carson Smith Scholarship show that Utah is committed to every single child getting a quality education, even if they don't exactly fit in the public school system," Saunders said.

Parents can apply for the Carson Smith Scholarship throughout the school year. For information about how to apply for the program, parents should contact Parents for Choice in Education at 801-532-1448 or visit www.choiceineducation.org.

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