DENVER - Students from 43 Colorado elementary, middle and high schools have officially harvested 5.3 million pennies, or $53,178.33, to benefit local charities through the Young Philanthropists Foundation's 2009-10 Penny Harvest. Since its inception in Colorado in 2007, Penny Harvest students have collected and donated more than $100,000 through the program.

Beginning this month, participating students will decide where that money can best make a difference in their communities. Issues like the environment, disaster relief, animals and homelessness will make the top of the list, and organizations like Children's Hospital, Max Fund, The Gathering Place and Denver Urban Garden will be amongst the grant recipients.

"The youth in our community have proven that despite the tough economy, individuals can still make a significant impact in their community," said Amber Gerding, Program Coordinator for the Young Philanthropists Foundation. "Our goal for this year's harvest was $40,000, and our students blew us away by their efforts. At a time when nonprofits are struggling for contributions, these local schools will grant $1,000 or more to causes near and dear to their students' hearts."

The Penny Harvest is a year-long service-learning program designed to teach children about their value as contributors to society. Each fall students gather idle pennies from friends and neighbors in their communities. Every penny the children collect is theirs to give away to charities of their choice in an educational group process that involves both grant-making and service throughout the year. Student donations and service hours will help hundreds of local and global charities and at the same time build skills and values that will last a lifetime.

Schools all across the greater Front Range are participating in this year's Penny Harvest, from districts including Denver Public Schools, Aurora Public Schools, Jefferson County, Adams County, Douglas County, Cherry Creek Schools, Colorado Springs District-11, St. Vrain Valley School District, and Holyoke Schools.

About Penny Harvest
Founded in 1991, the Penny Harvest is now the largest youth philanthropy program in the country, serving more than 500,000 students annually in more than 1,000 schools nationwide. In the past 18 years, children participating in the Penny Harvest have given away $7.7 million, awarded more than 16,000 grants and contributed more than 30 million service hours to their local communities. The Young Philanthropists Foundation administers the program locally in partnership with Penny Harvest creators, Common Cents. For more information, please visit www.pennyharvest.org/colorado <http://www.pennyharvest.org/colorado>.
About The Young Philanthropists Foundation
The Young Philanthropists Foundation (YPF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to engaging youth in philanthropy by creating opportunities for kids and families to give back to their community. We believe that philanthropy is anything you do to make the world a better place, and base our programming on a simple philosophy: if you give kids the opportunity to make a difference now, they will continue to make a difference the rest of their lives. Our mission is to give kids the power to change our world through philanthropy and volunteerism. For more information, please visit www.ypfoundation.org <http://www.ypfoundation.org>.