

***Wal-Mart Supports DC's TOP GRADUATES-  
Non-Profit Partners with Wal-Mart to Support  
DC Valedictorians and Salutatorians Towards Success in College  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 10, 2012***

Washington, DC ---As a part of their School Grade Incentive Program, **Total Sunshine, Inc.** (TSI) held its' **4th Annual School Grade Rewards Ceremony in June** to honor and support top graduates from high schools in our nation's capital. The Wal-mart Foundation has **supported 2012 top graduates and DC students** with a donation to TSI. The annual ceremony is exclusive to Valedictorians and Salutatorians and provides them with tools (including laptop computers) for success in preparation for college. It is also a platform event for congratulatory remarks, advice and encouragement from community leaders and persons relevant in education.

**Johnnie Scott Rice, Vice Chair-National Congress of Black Women (DC Chapter)** was the engaging Mistress of Ceremonies, and an insightful keynote address was given by **Robert Gomez of the US Department of Education on behalf of US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.** The event has been commended by **Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton, DC Mayor Vincent Gray, At-Large DC City Council Member Vincent Orange, Ward 4 DC City Council Member Muriel Bowser, Ward 8 DC City Council Member Marion Barry, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education Hosanna Mahaley, every Representative of the DC State Board of Education, school administrators, community leaders, parents, and students.**

This year marked a milestone for TSI, as the number of students supported at their ceremony has tripled with the inclusion of charter schools. Last year, only public school top graduates, and one charter schools' top graduates were supported with refurbished laptops. Recent support from the Wal-mart Foundation to TSI has ensured that needed educational tools are available for DC's top students for college readiness citywide.

The rewards **ceremony was filmed for television broadcast** within the award winning show "Total Sunshine!" The footage is **currently being aired on DCTV**, and showcases the support for students that TSI provides. TSI broadcasts have proven to be favored with viewers with recent multiple DCTV Viewers Choice Awards.

*"We are grateful that Wal-mart has addressed this pressing and relevant need. It demonstrates their commitment to the students in our nation's capital. We are in the process of disseminating the final support packages to the 2012 top graduates and look forward to continuing support of DC students towards positive outcomes citywide in 2013. Wal-mart has made a meaningful statement by stepping up to the challenge of ensuring these diligent students are prepared for success in education." --Merilyn Holmes, TSI President*

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