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Jennifer Nilsen '13, Gabe Rysdahl '11 & Anne Brooker '13

Ashoka's Youth Venture and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Announce Support of Two St. Olaf Student Social Ventures

Two Student-Led Teams Receive Start-Up Funding and Inclusion in Global Community of Young Social Entrepreneurs

MINNEAPOLIS, MN— April 18, 2010 — Ashoka's Youth Venture and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans today announced the selection of two new college social ventures from St. Olaf College through the *Be a Changemaker Challenge*, a program aimed at inspiring and supporting college students to use entrepreneurial principles to bring about positive social change.

The Be a Changemaker Challenge offers an online learning platform, staff support, and mentorship as teams of college students develop and pitch a social venture plan. Teams received start-up funding of up to \$1,000 from a panel of community members and partners. Approved St. Olaf teams included:

- **Kids Protecting Kids.** Jennifer Nilsen and Melody Rosen were inspired to start Kids Protecting Kids after learning about the number of abused children and the long-term affects of abuse. The team plans to develop an arts-based workshop to equip elementary students to recognize the signs of abuse and report it to teachers and other mandated reporters.
- **No Child Left Unsupplied.** Gabriel Rysdahl, Anne Brooker, and Jennifer Nilsen are launching No Child Left Unsupplied, a drive to gather unused school supplies often thrown away at the end of the school year. The team plans to work with local high school leaders to organize the drives and has commitments from local food shelves to help redistribute the supplies to under-resourced students in Minnesota.

"We congratulate the newly launched *Be a Changemaker Challenge* Team at St. Olaf," said Lane Nelson, for Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. "Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is excited to bring our people, expertise, and capacity to support college students in learning about social entrepreneurship and taking action through our partnership with Youth Venture."

Teams join a global community of over 4,000 "Venture Teams" – sustainable initiatives, organizations, clubs, or businesses - led by youth that benefit our community or planet - from over 18 countries. Official teams also receive post-launch support, career and resume consulting, and opportunities for internships and fellowships. Domestically-focused teams are eligible to compete for an additional \$10,000 grant through Youth Venture's partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service.

"Youth Venture's higher education strategy reflects a commitment to fostering changemaking by investing in and demonstrating the value of youth-led innovation on campuses," said Spectra Myers, Director Youth Venture's Minnesota Office. "These St. Olaf students, recognized by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, are developing the mindset and skills essential to effecting positive social change and critical in competitive job market driven by innovation and the blurring of traditional sector boundaries."

About Ashoka's Youth Venture

Ashoka's Youth Venture® engages over 75,000 young people in pursuing their dreams in 18 countries around the world. Since its founding in 1996, Youth Venture has launched nearly 4,000 Venture teams worldwide. Youth Venture inspires and supports teams of young people to launch and lead their own civic-minded organizations and businesses. Youth teams access workshops, tools, adult allies, a global network of like-minded young changemakers and seed funding to establish their own ventures that solve problems around them. Youth Venture was created by Ashoka, the global pioneer of the social entrepreneurship sector and the world's biggest network of changemakers. We believe that the greatest contribution we can make to the world is to increase dramatically the number of changemakers today and in every future generation. This is the key factor for success for every part of society, from a school to a company to an entire country. Ashoka's Youth Venture operates in 18 countries and online at www.GenV.net.

About Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is a Fortune 500 financial services organization with a unique blend of financial expertise, shared values and steadfast service that truly sets us apart. We are a faith-based organization, called to care for others. Thrivent Financial is the largest fraternal benefit society in the United States. As such, we have a unique ability to work with and through our members to carry out our mission of improving lives.