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## ***Cardin, Sarbanes Announce \$328,300 in Funding for New Irvine Nature Center***

*Funding Will Be Used for Outreach to Children from Urban Environments*

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Surrounded by children from Baltimore City’s Recreation and Parks Summer Camp program, **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** and **U.S. Congressman John Sarbanes** (MD-3<sup>rd</sup>) today presented the Irvine Nature Center with a check for \$328,300 to promote urban education programs. The Irvine Nature Center has become a national model for environmental education and is constructing a new, state-of-the-art green facility for its more than 500 environmental and educational programs. The new facility will be located on Garrison Forest Road and is scheduled to officially open in September.

The Irvine Nature Center, which services approximately 16,000 people annually, will double its capacity at its new location, allowing Irvine to increase the number and quality of its educational programs. This federal funding will provide additional support for Irvine’s urban outreach program, Schoolyard Discovery, which provides free watershed education and teacher training to 2,075 students and 18 teachers from the Baltimore City Public School System in environmental education.

“We must teach our children a love and appreciation of our world and part of that is to teach them how to be good stewards of the environment,” said **Senator Cardin**. “Irvine Nature Center is a role model for environmental education and this funding will help ensure that children who live in urban areas will also have a chance to learn and appreciate our environment.”

“This new state-of-the-art facility reflects the enormous commitment and dedication of Irvine’s remarkable staff, board members and volunteers,” said **Congressman Sarbanes**. “One of my mantras has always been that all children should have an opportunity to appreciate nature. This new center will ensure access to trails, wildlife and other outdoor activities for children who might not otherwise have such opportunities.”

“The move to Irvine Nature Center’s new spacious ‘green’ building, located on 116 acres in the Caves Valley, is a watershed event for Irvine. This historic moment would not have been possible without the enthusiastic backing of all our elected officials from the federal, state and local levels. Today, we particularly want to thank Senator Cardin and Congressman Sarbanes for their help in getting this funding for our urban education programs,” said William Balfour, President of the Irvine Board of Trustees.

In 2007, Congressman Sarbanes introduced and Senator Cardin co-sponsored the *No Child Left Inside Act*, an initiative to strengthen environmental education in America's classrooms. The bill would authorize significant new federal funding for states to train their teachers in the field of environmental education, support outdoor environmental education programs and develop model environmental curriculums.

The Irvine Nature Center is a non-profit education organization dedicated to the preservation and conservation of natural resources in the Baltimore region and Chesapeake Bay watershed. Its mission is to inspire appreciation and respect for the natural world, increase awareness of environmental issues and encourage preservation of the Earth's ecosystems.

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