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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Watch D.O.G.S. program successfully launches at Rosehill Elementary School

Lenexa, KS — After nearly two years of interest in Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students), Rosehill Elementary acquires the program due to Panera Bread's sponsorship. Watch D.O.G.S. is safe-school initiative program that brings fathers and other good male role models into schools across the country to serve as a volunteer and positive mentor for students. Rosehill Elementary School held their launch party for the program on Tuesday, February 26th.

The launch party on Tuesday evening attracted over 35 men and 40 students of the school. A soup dinner was provided by Panera Bread for the event, with the donation coming from the Oak Park Mall Panera Bread location. Panera Bread also donated complimentary cards as door prizes for the event. The students enjoyed dinner with their friends and fathers and played games while the fathers were treated with a guest speaker. Tom Howell, a father who participates in the Watch D.O.G.S. program at Sunflower Elementary in Shawnee Mission, KS, came and spoke to the men who attended the event.

Watch D.O.G.S. started in response to the Jonesboro, Arkansas middle school shooting that occurred in March 1998. Jim Moore, a father of one of the students at that school, felt something had to be done to create a better sense of security and safety in schools across the United States. In the program's 10th year of existence, Watch D.O.G.S. has a presence in over 400 schools in Kansas and the Kansas City metro. Each school has typically one or two father-figures in the school for a full day. They participate in several activities with the students, including reading with them in the library, eating lunch with children, and helping with homework in the classroom. Each father-figure also communicates with the security guard or D.A.R.E. officer in the schools to promote a high level of safety and security in the school.

"There's no question in my mind Watch D.O.G.S. will be a fulfilling & worthwhile initiative for our families. In a lot of ways the program has already been a success by opening a new dialogue between the school & the community," said Mark Gunter, Watch D.O.G.S. participant and father of two Rosehill Elementary School students.

Panera Bread continues each day to build their relationships with those living and working in their communities. Donations of our bakery items to those in need within our community keep Panera Bread connected with those that we serve each day. With its concept embedded in handcrafted, fresh-baked, artisan bread, Panera Bread stands by its mission—a loaf of bread in every arm.

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