

President Proclamation No. 09-01
Declaring February 19th as National Head Start Day

WHEREAS, the Belau Head Start Program is now in its 40th year of success in meeting the needs of children from low-income families; and

WHEREAS, the Head Start program has established itself as the foremost early childhood development program in Palau; and

WHEREAS, to achieve its goals, Head Start is not only responsible for providing a rich preschool learning environment, but is also responsible for providing a comprehensive nutrition and health program and school readiness; and

WHEREAS, ongoing health care for Head Start children is promoted through family involvement in health screening and follow-up treatments in Public Health Maternal Child Care services and its outreach activities, including dental care; and

WHEREAS, Head Start assists families in obtaining up to date immunizations for all enrolled children and their siblings; and

WHEREAS, to promote literacy, Head Start recognizes the value of reading to children and encourages reading activities, and provides literacy training for parents, especially in the vernacular language; and

WHEREAS, with the complex and shifting family structures, rapid cultural changes, increasing family violence, substance abuse, and mental illness, Head Start has a challenge for strengthening the families of children enrolled in the program; and

WHEREAS, in addition to focusing on the needs of children, Head Start provides training for parents to increase their knowledge and job skills, involves the parents in the education of their own children, in decision making for the program, and hires many qualified parents as Head Start staff; and

WHEREAS, Head Start program personnel recognize the remarkable strengths and courage of families as they struggle to provide the best for their children; and

WHEREAS, Head Start continues to promote full and effective partnership, not only with families but also with community services providers, programs, states and national government agencies;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau, do hereby proclaim **February 19, 2009** to be **NATIONAL HEAD START DAY** in the Republic of Palau.

SO PROCLAIM this 9th day of February 2009, at Melekeok State, Republic of Palau.

/s/
Johnson Toribiong
President
Republic of Palau