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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ESPN/Infiniti Coaches Charity Challenge – VCU Coach Shaka Smart

RICHMOND, VA, January 11, 2013 –

VCU Head Basketball Coach **Shaka Smart** is taking on the big guys again -- only this time to benefit a local non-profit organization. Coach Smart was selected as one of 48 NCAA basketball coaches to participate in the 3rd Annual ESPN / Infiniti Coaches Charity Challenge. The Coaches Charity Challenge is an online voting contest that begins **Monday, January 14th 3:00PM EST**, and will continue for six weeks. The four coaches that receive the most votes will advance to a two-week final competition, and the winning coach will receive \$100,000 for his selected charity.

Coach Smart has selected **FRIENDS Association for Children**, a local non-profit agency, which has been serving children and families in the Richmond community for over 140 years. Currently, **FRIENDS** serves nearly 1,000 children, ages six weeks to 17 years. There are two Richmond locations – the John C. Purnell, Jr. Child Development Center in Jackson Ward and the Robert L. Taylor Childcare Center in Church Hill. **FRIENDS** serves children from low-to-moderate income working families, and offers a broad array of services to help them gain critical literacy and developmental skills needed to succeed in school and in life. These services also help children achieve a greater understanding and appreciation of their community and the world around them.

To cast a vote for Coach Smart and FRIENDS, simply register at espn.com/infiniti, and look for the Infiniti Coaches Charity Challenge banner. Votes can be made daily throughout the contest. **VOTE SMART!**

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