Wi$e Up Teleconference
August 31, 2005
Investing in Your Children
Opening remarks – Cynthia Dawkins

Coordinator Welcome, and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Today’s conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I now turn the meeting over to Ms. Cynthia Dawkins. You may begin, ma’am.

C. Dawkins Thank you. Welcome to the 15th in a series of Wi$e Up teleconference calls, and a special thanks to each of you who are participating today. My name is Cynthia Dawkins. I am a social science advisor and member of the Wi$e Up team here in the Women’s Bureau national office. As you know, Wi$e Up is a financial education demonstration project being offered online with an electronic mentoring component and in a classroom setting. These teleconference calls are a component of the demonstration project.

The theme for today’s call, which will last one hour, is Investing in Your Children. We have three excellent speakers who will be introduced shortly. On a personal note, I am very pleased to be a part of the Wi$e Up program. I have learned a great deal from our previous calls on such topics as estate planning, buying and selling
a home, credit in a money world and others; and believe me, I certainly know and understand more now about such subjects as saving for retirement and other purposes than I did before.

I am even more excited to hear our speakers share with us today how to invest wisely in some of the most important people in our lives — our children. My son Omar is 13 years old now, and as a result of the Wi$e Up program I have taken several action steps, and I am proud to say that it's still better to start late than never. I have completed a will, so that Omar’s assets can be protected, have started to contribute to a Coverdell education savings account to help with his college costs, and have set up a long-term and short-term fund that will, I believe, help Omar in years to come.

If my son could become a Morehouse graduate, wow, I’d be the happiest mom in the world. So listen in on the call and learn as much as you can, and start investing in your children now if you have not already started to do so.

The format for the call today is that we will first hear from three speakers. Then, when the speakers have finished, the operator will come on and give us instructions on the question-and-answer session. I’m delighted that one of our speakers today, Ted
Sarenski, comes to us thanks to the efforts of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, AICPA, with whom we’ve entered into a partnership in the delivery of the components of Wi$e Up. Now let me turn the program over to Jenny Erwin, [Women’s Bureau] RA [Regional Administrator] for Region IX, to introduce our first speaker. Jenny?