

For Release: Immediate
Contact: Marjorie Wilson, (919) 707-5233

Date: May 12, 2011

Eight Wake County Organizations Receive Funding to Address Childhood Obesity

Raleigh – The N.C. Division of Public Health’s Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch has selected eight Wake County organizations to receive Healthy Places, Active Spaces grant funding to help local children, youth, and families eat healthier foods and get more physical activity. The John Rex Endowment awarded \$480,000 to support the grants, which will last for three years, beginning in May 2011.

Healthy Places, Active Spaces, an initiative of The Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch (PAN), is intended to increase the capacity of community organizations to implement sustainable physical activity and healthy eating opportunities for underserved children and youth in Wake County.

“Health behaviors are shaped by the world we live in,” explained Marjorie Wilson, Healthy Places, Active Spaces coordinator. “Telling kids to be healthy doesn’t make sense if healthy foods aren’t available or if opportunities to be active are out of reach, especially for our underserved youth. We want to make the healthy choice the easy choice for kids and families.”

The eight grantees, selected through a competitive grant process from more than 25 applicants, will implement the following innovative projects:

- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Triangle will enhance organizational policies and training to promote nutrition and physical activity among staff, volunteers, and participants.
- Boys and Girls Club of Wake County will adopt healthy vending and snack policies supported by nutrition education programs.
- Inter-Faith Food Shuttle will revitalize two existing community gardens to identify best-practices for engaging youth and families in gardening.
- The Life Enrichment Center will work with the Wake County Housing Authority (Wendell and Zebulon) to increase opportunities for physical activity and availability of healthy food among youth residents and their families.
- The Nessie Foundation (Parrish Manor Community) will create a fully-functioning recreation field for youth sports paired with play space for young children, a covered picnic shelter for families, and a walking path as well as other amenities.

-more-

- Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church will partner with the Raleigh Housing Authority at Stonecrest to create a community basketball court, garden, walking path and nutrition education programs.
- The Riley Hill Family Life Center in Wendell will install a playground, athletic facilities, garden, and walking trail, which will be shared with a nearby church.
- Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department will improve Zebulon Community Park by expanding walking trails throughout the park and linking them to a nearby church, neighborhood, and community center.

“These organizations serve Wake County youth and their families on a daily basis, so they have a unique opportunity to promote environments that support healthy choices, from providing healthy foods at events or during snack time, to increasing opportunities for youth to be more physically active through programs or improved facilities,” said Rocky Payne, Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch project evaluator. “We’re excited to see the impact of our partnerships with these great organizations.”

The Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch in the N.C. Division of Public Health and the N.C. Public Health Foundation are responsible for the administration of these grant funds, provided by the John Rex Endowment. Please contact marjorie.wilson@dhhs.nc.gov with any questions.

About the Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch:

The Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch helps communities build and sustain partnerships, and identify and implement policies and practices that make the healthy choice the easy choice. To learn more, please visit www.ncpanbranch.com/programs

About the North Carolina Public Health Foundation:

The North Carolina Public Health Foundation (NCPHF) was founded in 2003 in order to increase the capacity of the North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH), NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to serve the public health needs of North Carolina. To learn more, please visit www.ncphf.org

About the John Rex Endowment:

The John Rex Endowment invests in the development and support of activities, programs and organizations that improve the health of underserved children and youth in Wake County. To learn more, please visit www.rexendowment.org

###