

**Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities**  
*News Release*

**January 12, 2010**

**Boone and Newton County, Arkansas - One of 41 Sites Selected for  
National Program to Fight Childhood Obesity**

North Arkansas Partnership for Health Education Receives Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Major Grant for Healthy Kids, Healthy Ozarks

Harrison, January 12, 2010 – North Arkansas Partnership for Health Education (NAPHE) has been awarded a \$360,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to improve opportunities for physical activity and access to affordable healthy foods for children and families in Boone and Newton Counties. Based on a rigorous selection process that drew more than 500 proposals from across the country, the community represented by Boone and Newton Counties is one of 41 sites selected for the RWJF *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* initiative. The local project will be called *Healthy Kids, Healthy Ozarks*.

Today more than 23 million young people in the United States are obese or overweight. These trends are evident in Boone County, where 66% of adults are overweight and 34.1% of children are either overweight or at-risk for overweight and in Newton County where 41.5% of children are overweight or at-risk for overweight.

NAPHE and its two primary partners, North Arkansas College and North Arkansas Regional Medical Center, will lead the effort for the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Ozarks* project, working through the Boone County and Newton County Hometown Health Improvement (HHI) Coalitions. The coalitions will begin with a community health assessment to identify the barriers faced by low income families that make it difficult for them to find healthy foods or engage in physical activity in our counties. The information will be used to develop policies and improve facilities which will provide more access to active living and physical activity opportunities in our community. This could include: expansion of a pedestrian/bike trail system that connects neighborhoods with schools, churches, grocery stores and play grounds; joint use agreements that keep gyms open to kids and their families after school and new policies that increase and integrate active living opportunities into everyday life of the community. The *Healthy Kids Healthy Communities* coalition will also use the county health assessment data to develop policies and programs to make healthy foods more available to children and their families. The coalition hopes to accomplish this by: expanding the Community Gardens so that all citizens have access to a garden plot; expanding farmers markets and providing fresh produce at more locations such as Share and Care and convenience stores and changing marketing and display policies at local grocery stores to minimize marketing of unhealthy food choices and make healthier foods more convenient, obvious and desirable.

“We have a great track record of building community partnerships for enhancing healthy living options in Boone and Newton Counties,” said Dr. Rick Hinterthuer, Executive Director of NAPHE. “These Hometown Health community groups form the heart of our partnership and we will be able to harness their energy, expertise and passion to help us drive the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Ozarks* project. We will also engage children in both counties to take an active part in reducing childhood obesity. It’s all about using the power of partnership, and in this case sister counties partnering to improve the health of our children.”

“To reverse this epidemic, communities are going to have to rally around their kids and provide the opportunities they need to be healthy,” said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Through this project, NAPHE and its partners are doing what it takes to make sure children lead better lives.”

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities is a \$33 million national program and RWJF’s largest investment to date in community-based solutions to childhood obesity. With nine Leading Sites chosen in late 2008, the program now spans 50 communities from Seattle to Puerto Rico. All are targeting improvements in local policies and their community environment—changes that research indicates could have the greatest impact on healthier eating, more active living and obesity prevention. Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities is a cornerstone of RWJF’s \$500 million commitment to reverse the country’s childhood obesity epidemic by 2015.

The 40 other cities and regions just announced as Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities sites are:

Benton County, OR	Kane County, IL
Buffalo, NY	Kansas City, MO
Caguas, PR	Kingston, NY
Charleston, WV	Knox County, TN
Chattanooga, TN	Lake Worth, Greenacres and Palm Springs, FL
Cook County, GA	Milledgeville, GA
Cuba, NM	Milwaukee, WI
Denver, CO	Moore and Montgomery Counties, NC
Desoto, Marshall and Tate Counties, MS	Multnomah County/Portland, OR
El Paso, TX	Nash and Edgecombe Counties, NC
Fitchburg, MA	New Orleans, LA
Flint, MI	Omaha, NE
Grant County, NM	Philadelphia, PA
Greenville, SC	Phoenix, AZ
Hamilton County, OH	Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Houghton County, MI	Rochester, NY
Houston, TX	San Antonio, TX
Jackson, MS	San Felipe Pueblo, NM
Jacksonville, FL	Spartanburg County, SC
Jefferson County, AL	

Watsonville and Pajaro Valley, CA

All were selected because of strong vision, partnership and a commitment to make lasting change in their communities. The new program grants will continue through June 2013.

Visit [www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org](http://www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org) to learn more about these communities' work and plans.

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### **About the North Arkansas Partnership for Health Education (NAPHE)**

Established in 1997 as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt partnership between North Arkansas College and North Arkansas Regional Medical Center, NAPHE has as its vision to *improve the level of health and wellness of the citizens of Northern Arkansas and the surrounding region so that individuals achieve their potential to live full and active lives*. The overarching goal of NAPHE is to become a self-perpetuating and sustainable network which functions as a central agency for planning, development, and implementation of programs designed to improve the health of the communities we serve. NAPHE is a replicable model for how communities can partner with local, state, regional and national organizations to address their own health issues. NAPHE is also a partnership branch campus of the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) system of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. As AHEC-NW at Harrison, our key sustaining partners provide the human and fiscal resources necessary to support our mission. These partners include the founding partners North Arkansas College and North Arkansas Regional Medical Center, AHEC-NW at Fayetteville, the Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education, and the Corporation for National and Community Service (as an AmeriCorps VISTA Project site). See our website at [http://www.northark.edu/bus\\_w\\_northark/AHEC/index.htm](http://www.northark.edu/bus_w_northark/AHEC/index.htm).

### **About Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities**

*Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities*, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), advances community-based solutions that will help reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. It focuses on changing policies and environments to support active living and healthy eating among children and families. The program places special emphasis on reaching children who are at highest risk for obesity on the basis of income, race/ethnicity and geographic location. It will support RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic in the United States by 2015.

The Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities national program office is housed at Active Living By Design, part of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Established in 2001 as an RWJF national program, Active Living By Design now serves funders and partnerships across the country that are fostering community-led change to build a culture of active living and healthy eating.

### **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).