



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Kane County One of 41 Sites Selected for
National Program to Fight Childhood Obesity**

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant
to Help Fund “Making Kane County Fit For Kids”

Kane County – Kane County 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 the county. Based on a rigorous selection process that drew more than 500 proposals from across the country, Kane County is one of 41 sites selected for the RWJF *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* initiative.

Kane County’s “Fit for Kids” initiative began in 2008 in response to the fact that one in six—or 16 percent—of all Kane children under 18 years of age are obese, a rate that more than doubles for Kane’s Hispanic and African American children countywide. RWJF funding will support the “Fit for Kids” partners in engaging community members and leaders from all walks of life across the county to develop a comprehensive assessment of the changes needed in their communities to promote healthy living and prevent childhood obesity. This health-promoting vision will be incorporated in the county’s master land use and transportation plan updates. Expected results include: the advancement of Complete Streets policies and Safe Routes to Schools in multiple jurisdictions across the county; an increased access to safe places for physical activity in urban areas; and increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables through a community garden program.

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“We are thrilled and honored to have been selected to receive this grant,” said Paul Kuehnert, executive director of the Kane County Health Department. “Working together with our partners, we are committed to making it possible for all of Kane’s children to have great choices for health eating and active living in all parts of their daily lives.”

“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, Kane County 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:

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

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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 to learn more about these communities' work and plans. You can learn more about Kane County's "Fit for Kids" program by visiting www.kanehealth.com/fitforkids.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.

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