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Kingston, New York - One of 41 Sites Selected for National Program to Fight Childhood Obesity

Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County Receives Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Major Grant to Create Safe Routes to Schools and Community Gardens in City Parks through Complete Streets

Kingston, N.Y., January 12, 2010 Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County (CCEUC) 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 Kingston, NY. Based on a rigorous selection process that drew more than 500 proposals from across the country, Kingston, N.Y. is one of 41 sites selected for the RWJF *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* initiative.

Kingston is the most diverse city in Ulster County, where almost 40 percent of students are overweight or at risk of becoming obese. With the Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities grant, CCEUC and partners will work to transform the living and eating environment for children in the city. Partners include the City of Kingston, the Kingston City School District, the Kingston Land Trust, the Community Heart Health Coalition, Gilmour Planning, the Rose Womens Care Center, and the Ulster County Health and Planning Departments. Their strategy consists of creating safe routes to schools and parks, promoting the adoption of a Complete Street policy in the city, proliferating and supporting community and school gardens, and improving the snack options in after-school programs. Complete Streets are roadways designed with all users in mind bicyclists, public transportation vehicles, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

People often consider obesity to be a personal, individual health issue, however, this grant will empower our community in Kingston to create an environment where physical activity and healthy eating are natural, effortless choices for our children, said Project Director Kristen Wilson. We are committed to creating a place where our most vulnerable youth can grow up healthy.

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, Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster 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

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

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 help children eat healthier and be more active, and thereby prevent obesity. . Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities is a cornerstone of RWJFs \$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
Boone and Newton Counties, AR
Buffalo, NY
Caguas, PR
Charleston, WV
Chattanooga, TN
Cook County, GA
Cuba, NM
Denver, CO
Desoto, Marshall and Tate Counties, MS
El Paso, TX
Fitchburg, MA
Flint, MI
Grant County, NM
Greenville, SC
Hamilton County, OH
Houghton County, MI
Houston, TX
Jackson, MS
Jacksonville, FL
Jefferson County, AL
Kane County, IL
Kansas City, MO
Knox County, TN
Lake Worth, Greenacres and Palm Springs, FL
Milledgeville, GA
Milwaukee, WI
Moore and Montgomery Counties, NC
Multnomah County/Portland, OR
Nash and Edgecombe Counties, NC
New Orleans, LA
Omaha, NE
Philadelphia, PA
Phoenix, AZ
Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Rochester, NY
San Antonio, TX
San Felipe Pueblo, NM
Spartanburg County, SC
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 to learn more about these communities work and plans.

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About Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County started in 1913, is part of the Cornell Cooperative Extension land-grant system, a partnership between County, State, and Federal governments. The mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. The purpose of CCEUC is to deliver non-credit education to promote the application of research-generated information for economic development, environmental quality, and the development of human potential. Extension staff and trained volunteers deliver educational programs, conduct applied research, and foster community collaborations.

www.cceulster.org

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 .