

**FOR IMMEDIATE  
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***HCF ANNOUNCES GRANT TO EXPAND PE4LIFE INTO SIX  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
THROUGHOUT GREATER KANSAS CITY***

**KANSAS CITY, MO** – The Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City (HCF) has announced a \$400,000 grant to PE4Life to fund the first of two phases that will eventually expand PE4Life fitness programs to 70 schools in the Kansas City MO, Kansas City KS, Independence, Grandview, Center and Hickman Mills school districts.

The first-phase \$400,000 grant will be used for a pilot project to incorporate programming into 20 schools in the Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS school districts. Upon completion, the HCF board will entertain a \$1.7 million proposal in the spring of 2009 to expand to 50 more schools. When funding is complete, 70 schools and more than 25,000 students will benefit from PE4Life programs.

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions. Since 1970, the percentage of children who are overweight or obese has more than tripled. As of 2007, 12% of Missouri youth and 11% of Kansas youth were considered obese. Experts claim that quality daily physical education is the most effective and efficient way to positively impact the short and long-term health of children.

“In order to truly address the rise in obesity, HCF needs to go beyond programs focused only at the individual and combat obesity at the organizational and community level,” said Jane Mosley, HCF Program Officer. “This initiative with PE4Life will reach a large numbers of students, while simultaneously changing the environment in which they spend a majority of their day. Not only will the program provide greater access to physical education, but it will also help to instill healthy behaviors in a way that will enable students to maintain physically active lives.”

PE4Life inspires active, healthy living by advancing the development of quality, daily physical education programs for all children. PE4Life works with school educators, administrators and community leaders to provide sports and fitness activities to all children. Programs work to change the environment in schools to one in which physical education is important for all children, not just those who are athletically inclined.

"Children need more physical activity. Our society in general and our children in particular could benefit greatly from the benefits of health-and-wellness based physical education programs on a daily basis," said Brenda VanLengen, PE4Life Chief Design Officer. "PE4Life is about getting kids active and instilling the lifetime benefits of health and wellness. It's about enabling each student to maintain a physically active lifestyle forever. It means emphasizing fitness and well-being, not athleticism."

During the pilot project, key personnel from 20 schools will be trained at the PE4Life Academy to enable them to implement the PE4Life program by fall 2009. At the training, teachers are exposed to new ideas for physical education such as showing ways to incorporate technology into the curriculum. Customized, on-site assessment are also conducted to meet each individual school's needs.

PE4Life has been in the Kansas City area since 2003 and currently has programs in 40 schools throughout the metropolitan area. Schools that have implemented PE4Life programs have shown improvements in math and reading scores, increase in fitness levels and a decrease in disciplinary incidents. After its first year of implementing programs at Woodland Elementary School in Kansas City, MO, students experienced a 433% increase in strength, 207% increase in cardiovascular fitness and a 59% reduction in discipline incidents which resulted in a 67% decrease in out-of-school suspension days.

"The changes we've seen since launching the PE4Life Academy have been nothing short of incredible," said Craig Rupert, Principal at Woodland Elementary School. "Kids are more focused in the classroom, discipline rates are down significantly and kids are healthier. We couldn't be more pleased."

Since it began grantmaking in 2005, HCF has awarded \$70 million agencies addressing health needs in the community. Of these grants approximately \$10 million have been spent on fitness and nutrition programs for children and young adults.

"We are in the middle of a childhood obesity epidemic and the health implications for our children are alarming," said Steve Roling, HCF President/CEO. "There's been a variety of developments that have occurred which discourages a physically active lifestyle for children, including new media such as computers and video games that have made sedentary activities more attractive for youth, safety concerns

restricting outside playtime and schools dropping physical education programs and intramural sports programs. HCF is committed to providing resources to help eliminate these barriers to fitness. We are honored to partner with PE4Life as we collectively work toward a healthier future for our children.”