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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **H.P.A.R.D.'s Youth Ambassador Program Engages Youth as Leaders for Health and Wellness** *Funded by N.R.P.A. Commit to Health, Works in Partnership with Furr High School*

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) has received \$15,000 in grant funding to implement a Youth Ambassador program as part of its pledge to Commit to Health through the National Recreation and Park Association (N.R.P.A.).

H.P.A.R.D. is one of three agencies selected to pilot the Youth Ambassador Program, encouraging youth to promote health and wellness to their peers. Findings from these pilot programs will help to gather best practices that can be replicated across a national network of park and recreation agencies. Nationwide, parks and recreation play a key role in helping youth make healthy decisions, not only by providing healthy and nutritious foods and opportunities for physical activity, but also by teaching youth how to make healthy decisions. The Youth Ambassador program will allow youth to learn from their peers and support the next generation of health and wellness leaders. The Furr High School Green Ambassadors program is already active in this effort, taking a lead role in planting and maintaining a community garden in nearby Herman Brown Park.

"The Houston Parks and Recreation Department has taken an active role in helping our youth to learn to make healthy choices," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "The N.R.P.A. grant is a perfect fit for us, and we look forward to collaborating with the Furr High School Green Ambassadors to implement this program and to watching it take root in our community."

For Houston, the Commit to Health Youth Ambassador Program will expand access to N.R.P.A.'s Healthy Eating and Physical Activity guidelines for children enrolled in H.P.A.R.D.'s After School Enrichment Program. Activities such as Zumba classes and nutrition education will take place at multiple H.P.A.R.D. community centers. Field day events, food drives, and interaction with Furr's successful community garden initiative will also be part of the program.

The funding for this grant comes from the Target Corporation (NYSE: TGT) as part of Target's ongoing efforts to help make wellness more affordable, accessible, and inspirational for its team members, guests, and communities. N.R.P.A.'s Commit to Health campaign, aimed at park and recreation agencies, supports the implementation and evaluation of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards nationwide. As a result of the ongoing national campaign, approximately 136,000 children now have improved access to healthy foods and increased opportunities for physical activity. That number is expected to rise as more park and recreation agencies take the Commit to Health pledge. To learn more about Commit to Health, visit [www.nrpa.org/committohealth](http://www.nrpa.org/committohealth).

**Houston Parks and Recreation Department** (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,851 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit [www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org).

**The National Recreation and Park Association** (N.R.P.A.) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of more than 47,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, N.R.P.A. encourages the promotion of healthy lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit [www.NRPA.org](http://www.NRPA.org). For digital access to N.R.P.A.'s flagship publication, Parks & Recreation, visit [www.parksandrecreation.org](http://www.parksandrecreation.org).