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## NEWS RELEASE

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**CONTACT: Estella Espinosa**

(713) 845-1135

### **HPARD'S Project KidFit! Selected Among 2006 Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices**

Congratulations Project KidFit! The Houston Parks and Recreation Department's fitness and nutrition program benefiting kids 5-12 was among this year's selected initiatives for the 2006 Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices Recognition Project offered by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Project KidFit was recognized along with other deserving Texas initiatives aimed at preventing obesity by promoting youth fitness, health, and wellness. Project KidFit received their certificate of recognition at the 2006 Texas Public Health Association Annual Conference – "Healthy Communities: the Big Picture" held on April 24<sup>th</sup> in Dallas, Texas.

"HPARD is very proud of Project KidFit and the results it has produced for Houston," said Joe Turner, Director of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "Houston has taken great strides from being labeled one of the country's "Fattest" cities to being one of the fittest and most nutritionally conscious. Healthier practices begin with our children, and the recognition given to KidFit at the Texas Public Health conference this past April showed Texans the benefits of starting healthy practices at early ages and maintaining them through adulthood."

Project KidFit began from a 2003 grant by the U.S. Department of Education's Carol M. White Physical Education Program. The grant allowed HPARD to create KidFit, a physical education supplement for combating childhood obesity and promoting wellness among youth.

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KidFit targeted 200 youth participants from HPARD's Summer Enrichment and After School Enrichment Programs and children specially designated by Texas Children's Hospital's "Weight of Life" program as suffering from problems with obesity. Through KidFit, physicians were able to monitor targeted children for trends and behavior associated with obesity and each child was able to participate in nutrition and exercise classes as well as behavior modification programs that utilized positive reinforcements.

"Receiving this award demonstrates the effectiveness of community-based partnerships and our commitment to create unique physical activity programs that combat youth obesity," said Shadston Pittman, Director of Project KidFit. "I'm pleased that Project KidFit has become a model youth fitness program."

The 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Education Conference, "Healthy Communities: The Big Picture," was presented by the Texas Public Health Association and the City of Plano Health Department. The Conference aimed at improving knowledge and collaboration between public health partners and encouraged communities toward healthier lifestyles.

For additional information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department or on **Project KidFit**, call (713) 845-1135 or visit the Houston Parks and Recreation website at [www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org).