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SHASTA COUNTY SELECTED FOR NATIONAL HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE; YMCA PROJECT FUELS COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO COMBAT OBESITY AND CHRONIC DISEASES

One of 13 Communities Named 'Healthy Pioneers of Change'

SHASTA COUNTY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2006 – YMCA of the USA, the national resource office for the nation's 2,617 YMCAs, today announced that **Shasta County** and its **Healthy Shasta** collaborative has been selected to join the YMCA Activate America: Pioneering Healthier Communities™ project—a major component of the YMCA's national effort to promote healthy living among millions of Americans. **Shasta County** was one of thirteen communities named this week, and becomes one of 48 Pioneering Healthier Communities nationwide. Combined with those already engaged in the project, these newly named communities are forming the foundation of an aggressive social movement that is mobilizing leaders in local communities to respond to the public health challenge of obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition.

Through this project, launched two years ago, local YMCAs are serving as “connectors,” bringing together high-level representatives from the government, non-profit, and private sectors to drive meaningful change in each of their communities. The Shasta Family YMCA applied for this program and was selected after competitive review process. The Healthy Shasta collaborative, originally founded by the Shasta Family YMCA, Shasta County Public Health, and Mercy Medical Center, will serve as the lead in the local Pioneering Healthier Communities efforts. Healthy Shasta is a local partnership to promote healthy eating and physical activity among north state residents. www.healthyshasta.org

The new Healthy Shasta collaborative and a hand-picked team of community leaders will attend a national conference in Washington, D.C. in December and will identify projects that create and sustain healthy lifestyles and healthy communities.

“Pioneering Healthier Communities and our local Healthy Shasta collaborative will help us address our local public health crisis of physical inactivity, obesity, and poor nutrition,” said James Finck, Executive Director of Shasta Family YMCA. “We can make a difference by engaging all sectors of our community to break the cycle of unhealthy living.”

2004 Pioneering Healthier Communities

Dallas, Texas; Boulder, Colo.; Santa Clara and South Mateo Counties, Calif.; Rochester, N.Y.; State of Delaware; State of West Virginia; Des Moines, Iowa; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Bellevue, Wash.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Tampa, Fla.; Boise, Idaho; and St. Louis, Mo.

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About the Pioneering Healthier Communities project

The Pioneering Healthier Communities project is a part of YMCA Activate America™, the YMCA's national mobilization effort to promote healthy living among millions of Americans. The project was developed with expert advice and assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Their input is helping to build an infrastructure for replicating model programs and approaches to develop healthy communities nationwide. In addition, the Association of State and Territorial Chronic Disease Program Directors, the American Public Health Association, the President's Council on Fitness & Sports, America On the Move, and affiliates of the American Hospital Association: Association of Community Health Improvement and Health Research & Educational Trust are also working with YMCAs in this effort. The PepsiCo Foundation, Kimberly-Clark and Kellogg Company are sponsors. Health and wellness has been an integral part of YMCAs' charitable mission for more than 150 years. YMCA Activate America builds upon the YMCA's proud heritage of pioneering timely programs that respond to societal needs. For more information, please visit www.ymca.net/activateamerica.

The YMCA: A Long-Standing Commitment to Health of Spirit, Mind and Body

With YMCAs serving more than 10,000 communities and neighborhoods, no institution is better positioned to act as a unifying force in this effort than YMCA of the USA, the national resource office for 2,617 YMCAs. Offering a broad range of programs including youth leadership and volunteerism, YMCAs are collectively the nation's largest providers of child care, after-school and youth sports programs and are working to incorporate physical activity into all aspects of youth, family and community programming. Visit www.ymca.net for more information.

The Shasta Family YMCA

The Shasta Family YMCA is a charitable community service association dedicated to building healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The YMCA offers programs that promote good health, strong families, youth leadership, community development and international understanding.

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