

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 22, 2008

MEDIA CONTACT:
Chrissy Martin
361.853.2657
jlcc_pr@yahoo.com

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CORPUS CHRISTI, INC. INVESTS IN DISEASE PREVENTION WHICH COULD SAVE MILLIONS IN HEALTH CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND STATE

A return on investment of more than 4 to 1 when focused on increased physical activity, nutrition improvement, and no tobacco use.



On October 10, 2008 from 3pm to 6pm the Junior League of Corpus Christi will team up with The Fighting to Rid Gangs in American Foundation for the 4th annual Kids in the Kitchen event to be held at 2121 Mary St. (Corner of 19th and Mary St.) Corpus Christi, TX 78405. The students attending The Fighting to Rid Gangs in America Foundation after-school program will have the opportunity to experience some fun physical activity like Basketball and Self-Defense as well as learning how to make healthy choices in food.

A small strategic investment in disease prevention could result in significant savings in U.S. health care costs, directly affecting statewide initiatives, according to a report from the Trust for America's Health (TFAH). If Texas were to invest \$10 per person per year in proven community-based programs to increase physical activity, improve nutrition and prevent smoking and tobacco use, our state could save \$1 billion annually within five years through reductions in health care spending.¹ This is a return of \$4.70 for every \$1.¹

Corpus Christi Junior Leagues' Kids in the Kitchen is an association-wide initiative of The Association of Junior Leagues International (AJLI) designed to help communities address the urgent issues surrounding childhood obesity and poor nutrition. Launched in 2006 by Junior Leagues in over 225 communities in four countries, the program is now in its fourth year. Junior Leagues across the world and in our community are committed to improving the health of today's youth by empowering them to make choices that lead to healthy lifestyles. The initiative illustrates the power of voluntarism to address community needs on both the grassroots and international levels.

Educating both children and their families is essential to reverse the trend of increased levels of childhood obesity. Overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become obese as adults.² For example, one study found that approximately 80% of children who were overweight at the ages of 10–15 years were obese adults at 25 years of age.² The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states in 1999, 13% of children ages 6 to 11 years and 14% of adolescents ages 12 to 19 years in the United States were overweight and this prevalence has nearly tripled for adolescents in the past two decades.

The Texas Department of Health and Human Services stated:

The increasing prevalence of overweight and obese children and adults is a serious concern for Texas ... and has substantial economic consequences for our healthcare system. The economic costs of overweight and obesity in Texas during 2001 were an estimated \$10.5 billion. This includes direct healthcare costs, such as medicines and hospital stays, and indirect costs, such as lost productivity and wages due to illness and death. If the trend in increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity persists, the annual

costs associated with excess weight in Texas is projected to reach \$15.6 billion by 2010 and could skyrocket to \$39 billion by the year 2040.³

The **Junior League of Corpus Christi's Kids in the Kitchen** initiative aims to make an impact in this area by educating the public at the grassroots level regarding solutions they may adopt. The Junior League will provide lessons and demonstrations related to preparation of healthy meals and snacks that are both tasty and affordable. The children in the after-school program of Fighting to Rid Gangs in America Foundation are invited to take part in this initiative. By teaming up with Fighting to Rid Gangs in America Foundation, The Junior League of Corpus Christi can educate children in our community and begin to raise awareness. The Fighting to Rid Gangs Foundation was established to address the countless needs of at-risk adolescents in the Coastal Bend. The Kids in the Kitchen event will have Basketball, Self-Defense, Fruit-Veggies and Snacks, Portion Control games, and a Cooking Demonstration. The education and influence of this event will help to reverse the growth of childhood obesity and its associated health issues in our community.

Childhood obesity directly affects every aspect of business in our community in economic costs and the potential loss of future leaders. Starting at the grassroots level, The Junior League of Corpus Christi hopes to inspire our community and business leaders to get involved and most importantly, improve the quality of life for the Coastal Bend community.

About the Junior League of Corpus Christi, Inc.

The Junior League of Corpus Christi, Inc. is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable.

¹ Levi J, Segal LM, Juliano C. Prevention for a Healthier America: Investments in Disease Prevention Yield Significant Savings, Stronger Communities (2008). Available online at: <http://healthyamericans.org/docs/> Accessed on 9-23-08.

² Whitaker RC, Wright JA, Pepe MS, Seidel KD, Dietz WH. Predicting obesity in young adulthood from childhood and parental obesity. *N Engl J Med* 1997; 37(13):869–873.

³ Texas Department of State Health Services. Texas! Bringing Healthy Back: Overview. Available online at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/obesity/> Accessed on 9-23-08.

###