

For Immediate Release
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**North Arkansas Partnership for Health Education / AHEC-NW at Harrison
Selected as a Growing Healthy Communities Project Site**

(Little Rock) — *North Arkansas Partnership for Health Education / AHEC-NW at Harrison (NAPHE/AHEC-NW at Harrison)* was one of five organizations selected by the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP) as a Growing Healthy Communities Project site.

Through funding by the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas, ArCOP is proud to provide NAPHE/AHEC-NW at Harrison an award of \$10,000 to implement projects and programs that will impact physical activity and access to healthy foods and up to \$6,000 to conduct a regional summit to increase awareness on healthy, active living within Boone County. With input from community partners, NAPHE/AHEC-NW at Harrison will implement policy and environmental changes to increase physical activity and nutritional options that will lead to healthier lifestyles.

Dr. Rick Hinterthuer, Executive Director of NAPHE and Director of AHEC-NW at Harrison, states: "We will be working with community partners and ArCOP to help our community adopt changes that will last a lifetime. We are excited that we have been selected as a Growing Healthy Communities Project site and intend to help drive meaningful and healthy changes in Boone County."

According to the United Health Foundation's 2009 America's Health Rankings report, Arkansas is ranked 41st in the country in the percent of the population who are obese. In the past five years, the prevalence of obesity increased from 25.2 percent to 29.5 percent. Being overweight or obese contributes to numerous health conditions including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses.

ArCOP's mission is to improve the health of all Arkansas communities by increasing physical activity and healthy eating to reduce and prevent obesity. ArCOP builds relationships in communities to promote pedestrian safety, bike routes, sidewalks, neighborhood farmer's markets, community gardens, and access to nutritious and affordable foods. In addition to the Blue and You Foundation, support for training the Growing Healthy Communities Project sites, through ArCOP comes from: the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute (WRI), University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Public Health (COPH), Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) Lifestage Health Branch and UAMS Partners for Inclusive Communities.

For more information on ArCOP, contact Joy Rockenbach at (501) 683-3600.

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