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Contact: Janice Fong Wolf
(805) 543-2323

\$15,000 Given by HEAL-SLO Coalition to Fight Childhood Obesity Epidemic
Three agencies win grant funds for innovative health and fitness programs

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA—Close to \$15,000 in grant funds were awarded this month to three deserving agencies by the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation’s (SLOCCF) Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL-SLO) Initiative.

“The HEAL-SLO Coalition was voted the lead umbrella organization for childhood obesity efforts in San Luis Obispo County,” explained Janice Fong Wolf, director of grants and programs for the Foundation. “This series of grants prioritized pre-school interventions as a result of data collected by the Public Health Department in 2005-2006 and again in 2009, that indicated a 29 percent increase in the rate of obesity in local, preschool age children.”

The severity of the obesity epidemic and the future costs that come with it inspired community action, and the Board of Supervisors endorsed the creation of a county-wide task force to address some solutions. The HEAL-SLO Coalition, established in 2007, grew out of their efforts and has a diverse membership ranging from sports therapy facilities to school lunch programs.

Its mission is: “To increase healthful eating and regular physical activity among children in SLO County by working at each level of the socio-ecological model, such as through policy, behavioral and environmental changes, to affect improvement towards a healthy lifestyle.”

The Coalition invited applications for grants that will support those agencies who work to achieve these goals. This year’s recipients include:

- The Cal Poly Corporation – for an interactive educational curriculum for parents of young children, to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice at home.
- CAPSLO Child Care Resource Corporation – for a barrel garden program that will promote healthy eating and increase the number of fresh fruits and vegetables served to children in 30 family childcare provider settings.
- YMCA of SLO – for a nutrition and physical activity program in two YMCA preschools (SLO and Paso Robles) that will serve 40-50 children.

“We are delighted to see many diverse agencies getting involved in this critically important process,” said Wolf. “The HEAL-SLO Coalition is having a big impact on improving the health and wellbeing of our county’s children ... and ultimately our future.”

For more information about HEAL-SLO, or any of the other funds and endowments held by the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation, please call (805) 543-2323 or log onto www.sloccf.org.