



The Family Activity and Nutrition Task Force

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Task Force Announces New Initiative To Fight Obesity

SANTA ROSA, CA, March 10, 2006 – The Sonoma County Family Activity and Nutrition Task Force and Kaiser Permanente will announce a new initiative to fight obesity on Friday, March 10 at Roseland Elementary School in Santa Rosa at 9:30 a.m.

Recent news of the health impacts of the obesity epidemic on low-income residents of Sonoma County highlights the need for action. Because of its efforts to combat obesity and overweight among children, the Sonoma County Family Activity and Nutrition Task Force was recently selected as one of three community collaboratives to receive a Healthy Eating/Active Living Community Health Initiative grant from Kaiser Permanente. A total of \$4.5 million will be released to the three collaboratives to support HEAL-CHI efforts. The Task Force's plan for the local initiative will be unveiled at the event. The Task Force Initiative will focus on the neighborhoods of South Park and Southwest Santa Rosa.

The goal of this initiative is to establish thriving communities where residents have access to affordable, healthy foods and where active lifestyles are encouraged and supported. To achieve this goal, the Task Force will focus on supporting healthy eating and active living through sustainable policy and environmental change. The Task Force will receive initial funding of \$50,000 for a 9-month planning period from February through November 2006 to engage residents and find out what kinds of changes they would like to work on in their neighborhoods, schools and communities. Upon completion of a Community Action Plan, a total of up to \$1.5 million will be issued to the Task Force to fund and implement work over the next four years.

The event will highlight some changes that have already been made at Roseland Elementary School. Local officials are expected to attend as well as school and community leaders and spokespeople from Kaiser Permanente.

"We are as committed to the health of the communities we serve as we are to our individual members," said Mary Ann Thode, President, Kaiser Permanente Northern California Region. "This celebration is a fun way to demonstrate a serious issue – the importance of healthy choices by each of us, and the availability of community resources to help us make the right choices."

"Kaiser Permanente has always been an advocate of health promotion and disease prevention," said Sharon Levine, MD, Associate Executive Director, The Permanente Medical Group. "Our Thrive campaign is a continuation of that philosophy, and this grant is an 'on-the-ground' demonstration of our commitment."

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Kaiser Permanente, founded in 1945, is a non-profit integrated health care organization, with physicians, nurses and staff working in collaboration to provide high quality care to patients and address the health care needs of communities served by the organization. The Kaiser Permanente Northern California Region serves almost 3.2 million members. It includes 5,000 physicians in The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) and about 54,000 employees. The region has 19 major medical centers. Last year, Kaiser Permanente donated approximately \$300 million to a variety of community programs and agencies in Northern California. ###