

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
Wednesday, May 9, 2012

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### **CDC recognizes obesity prevention and control initiatives with Pioneering Innovation awards**

Six organizations and one person are recipients of the Pioneering Innovation Award for their work in advancing policies and environmental strategies to prevent and control obesity. The awards were given last night at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Weight of the Nation Conference in Washington, D.C. The award recipients were recognized in the categories of systems change, community mobilization, game changer, applied obesity research, and moving forward with technology. This is the second time the awards have been given.

CDC recognizes the need for a variety of approaches to reverse the high rates of obesity, particularly among certain racial and ethnic groups.

"We are excited about the impressive group of award recipients and the commitment each has made to programs and policies that achieve measurable impact in preventing obesity," said William H. Dietz, M.D., Ph.D., director of CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. "There is much focus on what individuals can do to improve their health, and while that is important, we must remember our nation's health is also strongly affected by environmental changes that result from the collective efforts of all sectors of society."

An awards panel of representatives from numerous public health organizations chose the winners from more than 90 applications.

Award recipients by category:

#### Systems Change Award

CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) is an evidence-based primary prevention intervention, run out of the University of Texas School of Public Health's Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living, to instruct children, their schools, and families in healthy eating and physical activity. By harnessing the school setting for child health promotion, reaching out to families, and collaborating with community-based organizations, CATCH has shown that system-level change can be achieved to prevent obesity. CATCH currently includes program elements for the preschool, elementary, middle, and after-school settings. In Texas, CATCH has been shown to reverse childhood obesity in El Paso and Austin school children; the program has now been adopted by 57 percent of elementary schools and 46 percent of middle schools in the state, reaching over 1 million Texas students. Throughout the United States, more than 8,500 communities and 10,000 schools in all 50 states have adopted CATCH. For more information visit: <http://catchinfo.org/>.

#### Community Mobilization Award

Dr. Antronette Yancey, professor at the UCLA School of Public Health, conceived the Instant Recess population physical activity promotion approach nearly 13 years ago as a way of integrating short bouts of easy-to-do exercise in workplaces, schools, churches and sports arenas. Instant Recess breaks consist of dance- and sports-themed movements scientifically designed to maximize enjoyment and energy expenditure, while minimizing injury risk and perceived exertion in the average sedentary, overweight individual. The approach has been implemented in collaboration with public health advocates, community-based organizations, businesses, government agencies, media outlets, and sports and fitness professionals, and evaluation studies have demonstrated favorable organizational and individual health outcomes. A library of more than 50 Instant Recess CDs and DVDs has been produced, including American Indian powwow, Latin salsa, Appalachian talking dance, cumbia, reggae, hip hop, line and African dance, along with basketball, baseball, football, boxing and soccer. For more information visit: [www.toniyancey.com](http://www.toniyancey.com).

### Game Changer Award

Safe Routes to School National Partnership was launched in 2005 by Deb Hubsmith who began working to improve bicycle and pedestrian routes to schools in California a decade before. As awareness of childhood obesity grew, she took her local successes, passion and pioneering spirit to the national level and worked with Congress to create the federal Safe Routes to School program, which is now established within the departments of transportation of all 50 states. More than 5 million children and 12,000 schools are benefiting from more pedestrian and bicycle pathways as well as education programs. Safe Routes to School National Partnership is now a powerful network of more than 500 organizations and has sparked a national movement to make streets safer for kids to walk and bicycle to school and in daily life. Safe Routes to School continues to be a catalyst for bringing about changes in the built environment that increase physical activity and safety, creating a healthier future for children and everyone. For more information visit: <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org>

### Applied Obesity Research Award

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measureable and timely change. For 40 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. In helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

Active Living Research is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that supports research investigating how environments and policies influence physical activity among children and families, with a special emphasis on the populations at highest risk for obesity: lower-income and high-risk racial/ethnic communities. A hallmark of active living research is the collaboration among many disciplines, including those outside of traditional health fields. Through its research and policy partnerships, the program has become a leading source of information on how the design of communities, parks, transportation options, and school policies influences physical activity, and has

raised the profile of these issues among policy-makers and public health advocates. For more information visit: [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

Healthy Eating Research: Building Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The program was launched in 2005 and supports research on environmental and policy strategies that can promote healthy eating to prevent childhood obesity, especially among lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity. Healthy Eating Research has funded 109 grants to date in critical areas such as school food environments, menu labeling, access to healthy foods in lower-income communities, food and beverage marketing to children, hunger and obesity, and child care. Healthy Eating Research provides advocates and decision-and policy-makers with evidence to guide and accelerate effective action to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. For more information visit: [www.healthyeatingresearch.org](http://www.healthyeatingresearch.org).

#### Moving Forward with Technology Award

Community Commons, run out of the Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems (CARES) at the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at the University of Missouri, is an interactive mapping, networking, and learning website for leaders from community to national levels, working to create healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities. Registered users have free access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data including state, county, ZIP code, tract, block group, block, and point-level datasets; contextualized mapping, data visualization, communication tools and apps; searchable profiles of hundreds of community initiatives working toward healthy, sustainable, livable, and equitable communities, with text and video narratives on what's working. For more information visit: [www.communitycommons.org](http://www.communitycommons.org).

For more information about the Weight of the Nation Conference, visit [www.cdc.gov/won](http://www.cdc.gov/won). To learn more about CDC's efforts in obesity prevention and control, and for more information about nutrition, physical activity, and maintaining a healthy weight, visit [www.cdc.gov/obesity](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity).

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