

GROWING MINDS, HEALTHY BODIES

A Collaboration led by Children First of Buncombe County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2005

Asheville Childhood Obesity Program to Reach More Children After Successful Pilot

*Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue to celebrate success
by joining in distribution of fresh produce to kids*

ASHEVILLE, NC – Dinner at some households is becoming a lot more nutritious! Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, chair of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), will be on hand to celebrate the success and growing reach of the *Growing Minds, Healthy Bodies* partnership, which gives weekly allotments of fresh produce for kids to take home, in order to encourage a comprehensive approach to better health. Lt. Gov. Perdue will give 40 Oakley Elementary School students backpacks full of fresh produce and recipes to take home on **Oct. 7th at 1:35 p.m.**

Last year, a pilot program involved two schools. Based on that success, *Growing Minds, Healthy Bodies* has expanded the Backpack Program to eight schools and community centers in Buncombe County and Asheville City, reaching 325 kids. The program is designed to increase access to fruits and vegetables and extend education about healthy eating beyond schools.

The USDA recently issued a kid-specific food pyramid to stem the national trend of obesity in children. The Backpack Program takes this kid-specific approach a step further by empowering families to eat healthy.

Growing Minds, Healthy Bodies is part of the *Fit Together* obesity-prevention initiative, funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. The partnership includes Children First of Buncombe County, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, and MANNA FoodBank in this area.

WHO: Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF Chair
Shelley Booth, project coordinator, Children First of Buncombe County
Beth Stahl, education and youth services coordinator, MANNA FoodBank
Forty students receiving their weekly backpacks

WHEN: 1:35 P.M., Friday, October 7, 2005

WHERE: Oakley Elementary School, guidance office
753 Fairview Rd.
Asheville, NC 28803

WHY:

- 14 percent of 2 - 4 year-olds are overweight
- 23 percent of 5 - 11 year-olds are overweight
- 27 percent of 12 - 18 year-olds are overweight

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