

**PRESS RELEASE**

November 5, 2004

**Fitness Forward Hosts 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference in Boston  
President of American Medical Association Delivers Keynote**

**Boston, MA** – The Fitness Forward Foundation held its 1st Annual Conference at the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center in Boston, Massachusetts, on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The conference, *Leading Youth to Live Well*, was attended by approximately 200 people, including health professionals, community leaders, educators, non-profit leaders, and students.

Jason Langheier, the Founder of Fitness Forward, introduced the organization to the audience, and the keynote speaker of the event, American Medical Association President, John Nelson, MD, MPH. Dr. Nelson gave an impassioned speech on the topics of uniting physicians and health care around evidence-based prevention, and the power of the patient-physician relationship and community collaboration to overcome the obesity epidemic.

Barry Zuckerman, MD, (Chairman, Department of Pediatrics, Boston Medical Center (BMC); co-founder, Reach Out and Read) spoke about his experiences as a pediatrician promoting community well-being through advocacy and unique social initiatives. Carine Lenders, MD, MS (Chief, Division of Pediatric Nutrition; Director, Nutrition & Fitness for Life Program, BMC) and Richard Ferber, MD (Director, Center for Pediatric Sleep Disorders, Boston Children's Hospital) shared insights and practical suggestions about healthy eating and healthy sleep for children, respectively. Drs. Zuckerman, Lenders, and Ferber are also members of Fitness Forward's Scientific Advisory Group.

During the afternoon session, Bill George, MBA (former CEO, Medtronic; Faculty, Harvard Business School) discussed how community businesses and organizations can play a role in developing healthy communities. Jay Winsten, PhD (architect of US Designated Driver Campaign; Director, Center for Health Communication, Harvard School of Public Health) spoke about sparking a healthy lifestyles movement through health marketing and community collaboration. Mr. George is also on Fitness Forward's Board of Directors, and Dr. Winsten is a member of the Scientific Advisory Group.

Jason Langheier (Founder, Fitness Forward), Rishi Shukla (Board of Directors, Fitness Forward; Clinical Coordinator, Nutrition and Fitness for Life Program, BMC) and Sarah Stogner (Program Director, Fitness Forward) introduced Fitness Forward's *Drive 2 Fitness* program, which has already been introduced in 18 public elementary schools in Durham, NC, and discussed how it could be implemented in Boston area schools.

In an effort to truly lead by example, the conference featured a healthy breakfast and lunch and culminated with basketball amongst interested invitees, medical students, and local children. Many attendees also participated in a fifteen-minute physical activity break during the morning session. Further, in the spirit of collaboration, many community programs displayed their programs to participants during the one day event.

Fitness Forward plans to launch the Drive 2 Fitness in Boston Public Schools in the next school year, with numerous local partners and well-known community role models.

The conference was hosted by Boston Medical Center's Pediatrics Department and Nutrition & Fitness for Life Program, and the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center.

**About Fitness Forward**

Fitness Forward is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization founded to facilitate healthy lifestyles to improve quality of life, and to specifically reduce the prevalence of childhood overweight and youth mental illness. Fitness Forward promotes *5 Wellness Targets* – Be Active, Eat Smart, Sleep Well, Don't Stress, and Be Aware – through the promotion of scientific *Discovery*, healthful *Opportunities*, and motivation of healthy *Choices*.

The Coach K Drive 2 Fitness program rewards Durham Elementary School children, teachers, and parents for achieving healthy behaviors encompassed by the *Wellness Targets* on a daily basis (expansion through North Carolina and Massachusetts in 2005). Additional programs in schools and health clinics, such as Fitness Anywhere, connect youth to opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.

Fitness Forward has also assembled a world-class Scientific Advisory Group that includes some of the foremost authorities on healthy lifestyles and health marketing, such as Walter Willet, MD, DrPH, Chair, Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health; T Moorman, MD, Director of Duke Sports Medicine; and Bill Kraus, MD, Research Director for the Duke Center for Living. On the Board level, a unique mix of experienced strategic sense and youthful compassion and energy lead Fitness Forward.

Through the organization's multiple channel Wellness Target Roundtable program, the Scientific Advisory Group guides Fitness Forward program design, as well as individual, health care, and industry decision-making.

Fitness Forward champions collaboration and works closely with the Mike Krzyzewski Human Performance Laboratory at Duke University Medical Center; Durham Public Schools; and the Durham Fitness and Nutrition Council on the Coach K Drive 2 Fitness program. The organization is also an active participant in the North Carolina Action for Healthy Kids, the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, and Get Fit with US (Department of Interior).

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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