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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

AAHPERD Pledges Support for First Lady's Let's Move Initiative to Battle Obesity

The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD), whose 22,000 members are teaching America's children how to make healthy decisions about eating and physical activity throughout their lives, pledges its support of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative. Since its founding in 1885, AAHPERD has worked to establish healthy school environments that include high quality health and physical education programs as an essential element for our children's physical, academic and social success.

According to AAHPERD President Dana Brooks of West Virginia University, "AAHPERD applauds the foresight of the First Lady in energizing the national fight against childhood obesity. We, the leaders and members, will do everything in our power to support the "Let's Move" initiative on behalf of healthy, active lifestyles for our nation's children and an end to the obesity epidemic."

An alliance of five national and six district associations as well as a Research Consortium, AAHPERD's organizational vision is to create a society in which all individuals enjoy an optimal quality of life through appreciation of and participation in an active and creative, health-promoting lifestyle. AAHPERD members include professionals working in elementary and secondary schools, higher education, administration, research, youth programming, dance, coaching, sport management, health education, public health, fitness, choreography, therapeutic programs, community recreation services, and other movement-related fields. Examples of specific federally-funded programmatic activities implemented by Alliance associations include:

- A 5-year cooperative agreement with the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) to increase the quality and quantity of youth physical activity opportunities. The multi-faceted project contributes positively to the health, education, and well-being of youth by reaching children, adolescents, family members, physical education coordinators and teachers, community organizations, educational administrators and policy makers, media, and the general public with cutting-edge information and resources about healthy lifestyles.
- The Head Start Body Start National Center for Physical Development and Outdoor Play (HSBS), was created through a \$12 million federal grant to NASPE and the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation (AAPAR) from the Office of Head Start, Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the center is to increase physical activity, outdoor play and healthy eating among Head Start and Early Head Start Center children, families and staff. HSBS has mobilized a cadre of 240 physical activity professionals nationwide from NASPE and AAPAR to provide consultation to Head Start centers. Through the National Center, Head Start staff learn how to incorporate more physical activity throughout the day. The development of multi-layered support ensures that programmatic changes promoting

healthy lifestyles can be sustained.

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) awarded AAPAR \$324,000 to develop and implement a bicycle safety program. Teachers and recreation professionals will use this engaging curriculum to teach safe bicycling to children in elementary school, middle school, high school, and recreation centers. Riding a bike represents a milestone in a child's physical and psychological development, and can lead to lifelong physical activity, a lifelong commitment to physical fitness, and a lifelong interest in healthy, energy-efficient transportation. This nationwide 3-year program will make a significant contribution to childhood obesity prevention by steering children toward safe, fun, self-powered transportation and recreation through bicycling.

The associations and research arm of AAHPERD also set national standards for physical, health, and dance education; promote research-based best practices; demonstrate that physical activity enhances academic achievement; and partner with many other health and education-based organizations, including the American Heart Association for our partnership of the Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart programs.

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AAHPERD, an alliance of five national associations, six district associations, and a Research Consortium, provides its members with a comprehensive and coordinated array of resources, support, and programs to help practitioners improve their skills to further the health and well-being of the American public. It is the largest organization of professionals involved in physical education, recreation, fitness, dance, health promotion and all specialties related to achieving an active, healthy lifestyle. AAHPERD serves 22,000 members and has its headquarters in Reston, Virginia, 25 miles west of Washington DC. To learn more, visit www.aahperd.org.