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EXERCISE, ROLE MODELING HEALTHY BEHAVIOR CRUCIAL IN COMBATING CHILD OBESITY

SAN DIEGO, CA (August XX, 2005) - Using words like “crisis” and “epidemic” and “critical,” experts all over the country agree that child obesity is at an all time high. The national statistics are staggering:

- **one in two people** in this country are overweight
- **obesity has become the number one threat** to the health and well-being of children
- the percentage of children who are overweight **more than doubled in the last 20 years**
- overweight youth have a **70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults**
- that number increases to 80% if one or more parent is overweight or obese
- **one in three children** born in the year 2000 will develop Type II Diabetes in their lifetime

“An unprecedented number of children are carrying excess body weight, which significantly increases risk factors for at least nine specific diseases, including Type II diabetes, hypertension, high blood pressure and asthma,” according to Gary McCoy, M.A. NASM ACPT. McCoy is the founder and chairman of **End Childhood Obesity Foundation** (EOC). “Perhaps the most significant fact about the epidemic is that obesity is an entirely preventable condition since regular physical activity not only helps to control weight, but can also reduce the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.”

“Significantly, even with all the research and common knowledge that physical activity is good for us, **more than one-third of today’s youth** do not regularly engage in vigorous physical activity,” he emphasized.

Americans, as a nation, simply must commit to reducing and eliminating childhood obesity in America, said McCoy. “Without question, parents lead the development of a child from the early years. Becoming more active adults is key to role modeling good behavior for our children. Adults need to create an environment that fosters physical activity.”

Lisa Druxman, a fitness expert, author and national speaker who holds a master's degree in psychology with an emphasis in exercise adherence and weight control, agrees. “The best thing parents can do for their children is to commit to a healthy active lifestyle for the entire family,” she said.

Druxman has these suggestions to encourage physical activity:

- Encourage your child to be active everyday. “Enrolling children in an activity they enjoy, such as gymnastics, soccer, martial arts, tennis or swimming, can be very beneficial.”
- Involve the whole family in activities like walking, hiking and biking. “Being active should be a family activity that everyone enjoys and looks forward to,” she said. “Plan your family vacations around an activity such as hiking or skiing.”
- Most importantly, be a role model for your children. “If your children see you regularly enjoying physical activity, they’ll be much more likely to be active throughout their lives.”

Druxman is also the creator of a stroller fitness program, Stroller Strides, TM a group fitness class that is now offered in more than 200 locations nationwide. Stroller Strides encourages healthy role modeling by providing moms with an opportunity to regularly work out with their child in a stroller.

The End Childhood Obesity Foundation was created to respond to the crisis of childhood obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition. The non-profit is charged with raising funds to provide grants for youth activity, nutritional, and education programs throughout the country as well as increasing the recognition of the issues surrounding child obesity nationwide.

For more information on the End Childhood Obesity Foundation (ECO), visit www.endchildhoodobesity.com or call McCoy at (480) 632 6803. For more information about Stroller Strides, visit www.strollerstrides.com.