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**CHILD OBESITY PROGRAM RECEIVES HISTORY-MAKING GRANT**  
***Orange County Community Foundation funding will allow PE4Me***  
***to expand to 10 additional schools in County***

(Orange County, CA - July 2007) The Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) has awarded a history-making \$100,000 grant to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to support its PE4ME Program designed to assist overweight teens by improving their fitness levels and increasing their knowledge of healthy living. It's the largest discretionary health-related grant ever awarded by OCCF and also the largest grant the PE4ME Program has ever received.

"After a comprehensive and competitive process, the PE4ME Program was awarded the funding because of its innovative and practical approach and also the quality leadership of Dr. Michael Weiss," said Karen Francis, MSW, Senior Program Officer at OCCF. "We believe that by awarding one large grant we can have a greater impact on this critical issue."

OCCF funding of the PE4ME Program will support an expansion to assist an additional 400 students and up to 10 additional schools in the Capistrano, Saddleback, and Garden Grove school districts. Currently the program assists more than 300 children at nine schools. In addition, funding will support a part-time PE4ME program director position that will allow for the training and maintenance of the current and future program sites.

According to the latest Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County (2006), there has been a significant increase in the percentage of overweight children in Orange County. From 2002 to 2004, the number of overweight adolescents increased 13 percent. Across the U.S., the percentage of overweight children and adolescents has more than triple compared to 30 years ago, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Research also shows that overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults, and these youth have an increased risk for chronic diseases.

## **GRANT AWARDED TO DEAL WITH CHILD OBESITY IN O.C.**

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Dr. Weiss, board president of the AAP and founder of the PE4ME Program, attributes these startling statistics primarily to the lack of healthy nutrition and the overuse of technology versus physical activity. When asked why he created the PE4ME Program, Dr. Weiss commented, "I see a need that is not being met in Orange County, and if this issue isn't addressed today, this could very well be the first generation of children that aren't going to live longer than their parents. As a pediatrician, this is a very sad realization so I decided to do something about it."

The PE4ME Program has three core elements: accountability (students receive a grade), affordability (it's free), and accessibility (program is offered on school campuses during the regular school day). The Program strives to emphasize lessons for life-long good health and employs innovative cardiovascular and resistance training techniques to achieve its goals. The measurable objectives are to reduce body fat, increase daily physical activity, and create a life-long love of physical activity and sound health. The program works together with school personnel, community volunteer pediatricians, nutritionists and PE4ME program staff to provide a for-credit high school physical education class. Participating students receive a free health screening and the AAP provides the text books and curriculum, exercise equipment, and tools to the school. A school instructor, along with the support of the AAP Medical Director, engages the youth in a variety of exercise routines, including kickboxing, walking, and weight lifting three to five days per week.

"We are grateful to receive this funding from the Orange County Community Foundation and its donors, and especially appreciate their insight on how critical a problem this is in our county. Because of your generosity, hundreds of youth will have the opportunity to create a healthier life for themselves," concluded Dr. Weiss.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians that is committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. Since its founding in 1930, the not-for-profit organization has grown to include 59 chapters in the United States and seven in Canada. The PE4Me Program is one of its newest outreach efforts in Orange County. For more information, visit [www.Pe4meonline.com](http://www.Pe4meonline.com).

Founded in 1989, the Orange County Community Foundation encourages, supports, and facilitates philanthropy in Orange County. During the 2006 fiscal year, the tax-exempt public charity distributed grants and scholarships totaling \$17.7 million to more than 400 nonprofits and numerous individuals, and received \$26 million in contributions from generous donors who give to causes closest to their hearts. For more information, visit [www.oc-cf.org](http://www.oc-cf.org).

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