

For immediate release
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Volunteers Needed for Program Uniting Generations in the Fight Against Obesity

*Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation announces grant
bringing proven wellness program to Hartford*

HARTFORD, Conn. –December 20, 2011– Remember riding your bicycle all over town until dark and then coming home to a hot, healthy meal your mom prepared? Lots of adults do, and now many of them are volunteering to help the next generation – and in the process themselves – get and stay healthy through an innovative program called CATCH Healthy Habits.

Created by the OASIS Institute (OASIS), CATCH Healthy Habits, is a unique intergenerational health program which pairs older adults with children to encourage healthier eating and physical activity. If you haven't heard of the program you probably will soon because it just got a big boost.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation announced that CATCH Healthy Habits will be coming to the Hartford area thanks to a \$41,000 grant from its corporate foundation. The funds are part of a larger, \$2.7 million grant commitment that will expand the program to 18 cities over two years. In Hartford, OASIS will work in partnership with Community Renewal Team, Inc., to implement the program.

Obesity-related expenses and complications are quickly becoming one of the nation's most pressing public health challenges. Across the country, 35 percent of people age 50 and older lead sedentary lifestyles, and obesity rates in the United States have more than tripled in the last three decades among children ages 6 to 11.

Volunteers age 50 and over are needed for the program. Many will work with children in kindergarten through the fifth grade in weekly one-hour sessions to play active games, learn about food choices and make healthy snacks. Volunteers can also contribute their skills to help with training, community awareness, coordination and other leadership roles.

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We know that if we can get kids off to a healthy start they have a better chance at avoiding life-long medical issues and remaining healthy and productive over the course of their entire lives,” said David R. Fusco, president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Connecticut. “That’s why we are excited to work with OASIS to bring this program to students in Hartford because we have seen the positive difference it makes in the lives of the students and adult volunteers involved in the program.”

Over the next two years, OASIS will work with its primary partner, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, along with YMCAs, schools and other community partners to reach an estimated 5,000 children and volunteers nationwide.

“Community Renewal Team, Inc., and OASIS share a goal to engage mature adults in meaningful community service,” said Renee Hamel, Hartford’s CATCH Healthy Habits Coordinator. “CATCH Healthy Habits not only helps to combat the serious issue of obesity, but also benefits the adults who volunteer. Research shows that volunteers live longer, healthier lives than those who do not volunteer.”

CATCH Healthy Habits will start in early 2012 in Hartford, joining nine other cities across the country. The program will expand throughout 2012, bringing the total to 18 locations in 14 states.

Those interested in volunteering in the CATCH Healthy Habits program should contact Renee Hamel, Hartford’s CATCH Healthy Habits Coordinator by calling 860-760-3087, or emailing, hamelr@crtct.org, or visiting www.catchhealthyhabits.org.

About Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation

Through charitable grant making, the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation LLC, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, promotes Anthem’s inherent commitment to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and families in communities that Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield serves. The Foundation focuses its funding on strategic initiatives that address and provide innovative solutions to health care challenges, as well as promoting the Healthy Generations Program, a multi-generational initiative that targets specific disease states and medical conditions. These include: prenatal care in the first trimester, low birth weight babies, cardiac morbidity rates, long term activities that decrease obesity and increase physical activity, diabetes prevalence in adult populations, adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and smoking cessation. The Foundation also coordinates the company’s annual associate giving campaign and its parent foundation provides a 50 percent match of associates’ campaign pledges. ®ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbols are

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About Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Connecticut

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About the OASIS Institute

OASIS is a national education organization dedicated to enriching the lives of adults age 50 and older through lifelong learning and service. Offering stimulating programs in the arts, humanities, health, technology and volunteer service, OASIS brings people together to learn, lead and contribute in their communities. Hartford is part of a national network that serves a diverse audience through educational centers and community partners. The OASIS Institute is nationally headquartered in St. Louis, Mo. For more information, visit www.oasisnet.org.

About Community Renewal Team, Inc.

Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is to change lives and create opportunity for individuals and families in our communities. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families become self-sufficient while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut.
www.crtct.org

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