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FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TAKE AIM AT CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND INACTIVITY WITH \$1.3 MILLION IN YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS

With national reports suggesting that as many as a third of all children are dangerously overweight - and children in low-income families are most at risk - Franklin County Commissioners are taking aim at preventing childhood obesity by keeping children active and engaged with an investment of more than \$1.3 million into a variety of youth summer camps across the county.

The 2012 Youth Summer Camp Program will serve nearly 1400 boys and girls from low-income families at 47 summer camp locations throughout Franklin County.

“This annual investment in summer camps does much more than target obesity in children by keeping our most-vulnerable young people active and engaged,” said County Commissioner President Paula Brooks. “This program is also aimed at supporting parents and their efforts to remain engaged in their own work or job training instead of worrying about their sons and daughters sitting at home alone.”

With federal funds directed through Franklin County Job and Family Services, 17 local organizations will share in a total of \$1,344,126, including the YMCA of Central Ohio, Community Development for All People, Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services, the Godman Guild, St. Stephen’s Community Services, and the J. Ashburn Jr. Youth Center.

“By investing in a wide variety of dedicated community partners, we are able to reach out to residents in more parts of our county and connect with more young people who might not otherwise be able to attend a summer camp,” said County Commissioner Marilyn Brown. “My first job was at a summer camp, so I know firsthand how beneficial these programs can be to the health, happiness and well-being of our county’s children.”

A recently-released report from the Institute of Medicine revealed that one in three American children are either overweight or obese and suggested that progress to stop the epidemic has been too slow. Similar studies have estimated that almost 45 percent of overweight or obese children come from families whose income falls below the federal poverty level.

County Commissioner John O’Grady added, “Good health and physical activity are essential for all children and for the adults and workers they will become. For this summer, these camps will help combat childhood obesity and help parents who cannot afford summer daycare. At the same time, these investments help build a foundation for well-educated, healthy, productive and successful adults for our future.”

One of the 17 funded programs this summer is through the YMCA of Central Ohio, with camps using the evidence-based *Food, Fit and Fun* program designed to develop healthy habits for young people.

“At the Y, we believe that all children deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can become. Camp helps our youth remain active during the summer months, discover new interests,

develop confidence and social skills to become future leaders,” said Andrew Roberts, President of the YMCA of Central Ohio. “The funding we receive through the County Commissioners will help us strengthen our community by providing support to families who may face economic challenges in providing their children with the camp experience.”

Below is a complete list of the local agencies that are part of Franklin County’s 2012 Youth Summer Camp Program:

Asian American Community Services	A+ Arts Academy
Central Community House	Columbus Housing Partnership
Columbus Recreation and Parks	Community Arts Project/King Arts Complex
Community Development for All People	Directions for Youth and Family Services
Easter Seals Central & Southeast Ohio	Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services
Godman Guild Association	Homeless Families Foundation
J. Ashburn Jr. Youth Center	The Salvation Army
St. Stephen’s Community Services	Whitehall City Schools
YMCA of Central Ohio	

County Commissioners are expected to approve the funding for the 2012 Youth Summer Camp Program at their May 15th General Session.

These contracts are the latest in the County Commissioners “Investing in our Next Generation” initiative, a year-long examination of the estimated \$343 million in investments that County agencies will make in youth and child-oriented programs in 2012, and how these agencies and programs can work better together to increase their impact on Franklin County’s young people.

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For more information on the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, log on to: www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners

To learn more about the programs offered by the YMCA of Central Ohio, visit www.ymcacolumbus.org