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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 9, 2007

**Contact:** Nikki Hillier, Program  
Coordinator (217) 531-2914  
Lori A. Holmes, Public Relations  
(217) 531-2927

## **Dr. Howard Elementary School Partners with the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District to Fight the National Crisis of Obesity in Children**

*Second Year of Partnership Promotes Progressive Healthy School Changes – Including  
Annual Fundraising Efforts*

Champaign, IL – Dr. Howard Elementary School has partnered for the second year with the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) in the implementation of the highly successful Coordinated Approach To Child Health (CATCH) Program. The CATCH Program is a multi-component program that promotes positive healthy behaviors in students and emphasizes the need for a healthy lifestyle to improved both living and learning. CATCH has three core components – nutrition, physical activity, and health education.

“CATCH is a fun, well-rounded program that affords students the ability to excel through a series of consistent messages from a variety of sources,” said Nikki Hillier, Program Coordinator of Health Promotions for CUPHD. “CATCH builds an alliance of children, parents, teachers, and school staff to teach skills and behaviors associated with maintaining healthy lifestyles. Dr. Howard Elementary School has been a great partner and we look forward to building on our joint successes this year.”

In the spirit of CATCH, Dr. Howard Elementary School is incorporating the ideals of healthy living in all school functions, including this year’s annual fund-raiser. Dr. Howard Elementary students will be asking family members and friends to donate money to the Dr. Howard Walk-a-thon. On October 17, 2007, students will walk for 90 minutes to raise money for their school. Typically, schools sell assorted foods and merchandise to raise money for school programs. A leading product in these fundraising drives is candy. Dr. Howard Elementary does not wish to support “junk food habits”, and is excited by the walk-a-thon. Students will be showing that fitness is easy and fun while walking to raise funds.

“Our kids know what foods are and aren’t healthy, but we are sending them mixed messages when we promote candy sales at school,” said Wendy Starwalt, Teacher, Dr. Howard Elementary.

The Walk-a-thon is just one of several programs implemented by the CATCH partnership to promote a more healthy school environment. Dr. Howard Elementary has also started a walking club with foot charm incentives awarded for each mile a student has walked, and “Fitness Friday”, an interactive physical activity component that allows selected 5<sup>th</sup> graders to demonstrate fitness activities to lower grades and encourage increased participation by everyone.

For more information about CATCH and other CUPHD programs and services, please call 217-352-7961 or visit us on the web at [www.cuphd.org](http://www.cuphd.org).

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