

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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KIDS TO LEARN ABOUT NUTRITION & FITNESS

Minneapolis –School children in Eagan, Forest Lake, St. Louis Park, Hopkins. Golden Valley and Minnetonka are about to learn they have the “Power to be Fit!” this week. Allina Hospitals & Clinics, PreferredOne, and the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), have joined together to sponsor an in-school curriculum on fitness and nutrition, built around the educational play, “The Power of the Pyramid,” which was introduced last year and will be presented in 325 Minnesota schools by the end of the 2007 school year.

The 30-minute play “The Power of the Pyramid” is presented by The National Theatre for Children, which has 27 years of experience producing highly successful educational plays. This is the first time health care providers and schools have collaborated on a program to teach children and their families how to stay healthy. The schedule of performances is listed below.

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"Allina is committed to improving the health of the communities we serve -- and that means looking out into the community to address public health concerns," said Ellie Zuehlke, MPH, director, community benefit, for Allina Hospitals & Clinics. "As a part of our Community Benefit Program, we are proud to sponsor an initiative to encourage awareness and conversation about healthy eating and physical activity in schools, with families, and in the clinic setting."

"Teaching children and their families how important it is to eat healthy foods and be active will help them maintain a healthy weight, and avoid diseases linked to obesity such as diabetes," said G. Richard Geier, M.D., president of the MMA, which represents more than 10,000 physicians throughout the state.

The program makes it easy and fun to learn about nutrition and fitness. In school, children see a live interactive performance of "The Power of the Pyramid." Its lessons are reinforced by workbooks, take-home activities to complete with their family, and classroom posters. In Allina clinics and other clinics selected by PreferredOne, children receive an educational CD-ROM game and a family guide.

Teachers gave the program top marks in an evaluation conducted in 162 elementary schools from February through May 2006, rating it highly in overall value, ability to stimulate classroom discussion and likelihood that the students would retain the material.

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New this year is the National Theatre for Children's Online learning center with games and quizzes linked to Prince of the Pyramid that teach kids about nutrition and fitness.

Visit www.NTCLearningCenter.com.

"Nutrition education is key to reducing obesity and this initiative will get our children headed toward healthy behavior and improved health in a fun, attention-getting positive manner," said John Frederick, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer for PreferredOne. "Nationally health plans spend billions of dollars each year on the results of unhealthy behavior. PreferredOne is pleased to be able to support this initiative that will get our children headed toward better health."

The play will be performed at Park Spanish Immersion Elementary in St. Louis Park on Nov. 7; at the Gatewood Elementary in Minnetonka on Nov. 7; at Forest Lake Elementary in Forest Lake on Nov. 8; at Rahn Elementary School in Eagan on Nov. 8; at Glen Lake Elementary in Hopkins on Nov. 9; at Meadowbrook Elementary in Golden Valley on Nov. 9; at L.H. Tanglen Elementary in Minnetonka on Nov. 10 and at Katherine Curren Elementary in Hopkins on Nov. 10. The play was performed at Alice Smith Elementary and Eisenhower Elementary in Hopkins on Nov. 6. Please contact Lorrie Holmgren at 612/362-3742 for times.

The play is scheduled to be performed at many other Twin Cities area locations. For information about other performances, contact Katie Griep at the National Theatre for Children, 612/341-0882, ext. 202.

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To download photographs of the production to use in your publication, visit

www.nationaltheatre.com.

Other Web sites:

Allina: www.allina.com/community,

PreferredOne: www.PreferredOne.com,

Minnesota Medical Association: www.mmaonline.net/obesity/

The National Theatre for Children: www.nationaltheatre.com and

www.NTCLearningCenter.com

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