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Sound Body Sound Mind: Four More Schools Get Fit!!

LOS ANGELES, Ca. – April 29, 2005. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies will be held on May 3rd and 4th at four Los Angeles public high schools, North Hollywood H.S., Joaquin Miller H.S., Carson H.S., and The Accelerated School, to launch the *Sound Body Sound Mind Program*, a comprehensive physical fitness program, designed to promote self-confidence and healthy lifestyle choices among students.

The *Sound Body Sound Mind* program, established in 1999 by the Cynthia L. & William E. Simon Jr. Foundation and already operational at 16 Los Angeles area high schools, provides state of the art exercise equipment, professional development for physical education teachers, and a comprehensive system to assess students' fitness progress at each of its schools. "With the current obesity epidemic among youth in our state, and the scarcity of educational resources, there is clearly an urgent need for such a program," said Janice Collins, a top official with LAUSD.

For example, in the Los Angeles area, there is a glaring lack of success by high school students in meeting the current California Challenge Physical Education (CCPE) Standards. In 2004, only 24.1% of students statewide met the minimum requirements to be considered "fit". The performance of LAUSD is even more dismal with only 1 of every 10 students meeting those same requirements in 2004.

"We are delighted to be able to bring our *Sound Body Sound Mind* program to four more schools and thousands of new high school students," said Bill Simon, Co-Founder of the program. "By instilling and encouraging the tools for a healthy lifestyle, we hope to improve students' lives over the short and long term. Good habits are best started at an early age".

Mr. Simon and his team have plans to more than double the number of *Sound Body Sound Mind* schools over the next two years. In 2004, the Simon Foundation was awarded the Carol M. White Physical Education for Progress Grant by the U.S. Department of Education, which will help fund over thirty new participating schools over a three-year period. *Sound Body Sound Mind* will surely touch the lives of countless more high school students, helping them to become healthy and self-confident adults.

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