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Northern California News Bureau

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**MAKING MODESTO A HEALTHIER PLACE
TO LIVE, LEARN, PLAY AND WORK**

*Group plans to improve access to healthy food
and opportunities for people to be physically active*

MODESTO, Calif., March 29, 2007 – A local health coalition has a vision of a healthier West Modesto – with plans that could include a weekly farmers’ market, walking trails along the West Modesto canal strip, healthy choices in school vending machines and more fresh fruits and vegetables at neighborhood corner markets.

The efforts are part of a community action plan by the West Modesto/King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative to help transform area neighborhoods, schools, health care settings and workplaces so that healthy food is convenient and affordable and physical activity is part of daily life.

Last year, the collaborative was awarded a five-year, \$1.5 million Healthy Eating Active Living – Community Health Initiative (HEAL-CHI) grant from Kaiser Permanente’s Northern California Community Benefit program. The Kaiser Permanente grant is part of a \$5.5 million investment in three communities – Modesto, Richmond and Santa Rosa – to help improve community health, reduce health disparities and curb obesity rates.

“This initiative is an opportunity for us to make changes that will impact future generations,” said Carole Collins, coordinator of the Stanislaus Multi-Cultural Community Health Coalition/West Modesto King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative. “We hope to transform our environment with exciting projects such as a walking trail and a farmers’ market.”

“Kaiser Permanente believes that the best way to promote health is to prevent disease,” said Michael Wong, MD, assistant physician in chief of health promotion for Kaiser’s Central Valley service area. “This grant provides funding and evidence-based, clinical expertise for addressing the obesity epidemic and improving community health through proven interventions and long-term partnerships, programs and activities.”

The next phase of the project includes a 30-day information-gathering outreach effort. Beginning April 6, West Modesto residents will be asked to participate in an automated

telephone survey about physical activity and food choices. The anonymous survey will take about 10 minutes to complete, and the information will provide important input to the planning process. Beginning April 2, residents also can complete the survey by calling a toll-free number, (866) 459-2527.

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***Note:** To arrange interviews with West Modesto/King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative representatives or some of the area residents who will benefit from the initiatives, please contact Lupe Gervas at (510) 501-0707.*

About Kaiser Permanente

Kaiser Permanente, founded in 1945, is a non-profit integrated health care organization, with physicians, nurses and staff working in collaboration to provide high quality care to patients and address the health care needs of communities served by the organization. The Kaiser Permanente Northern California Region serves almost 3.2 million members. It includes 5,000 physicians in The Permanente Medical Group (TPMG) and about 54,000 employees. The region has 19 major medical centers. Each year, Kaiser Permanente donates over \$375 million to a variety of community programs and agencies in Northern California.

<http://www.kaiserpermanente.org>

About the West Modesto/King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative

*The Stanislaus Multi-Cultural Community Health Coalition*West Modesto/King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative is a direct result of the Stanislaus County Minority Community Health Coalition, which was established by a group of concerned individuals in public service, education and the community in 1991. This diverse group materialized to address the lack of accessible health care services being offered in the ever-changing ethnic communities of Stanislaus County. The formation of such a coalition marked the first of its kind in Stanislaus County. Today, the Stanislaus Multi-Cultural Community Health Coalition*West Modesto/King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative is a non-profit organization, which maintains a high profile in the community, as a result of our outreach, engagement and advocacy components. The West Modesto/King Kennedy Neighborhood Collaborative has over 600 members and proudly celebrates 17 years of service to our community.*