

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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2010 ‘Champions of Health’ winners announced Reservations accepted for Oct. 18 awards ceremony and dinner

“Farm to You” has been named the 2010 Children’s Health Champion and recipient of the Dr. Rodney Huey Memorial Champion of Oklahoma Health award, the highest honor of the Champions of Health awards.

Coordinated by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (OCES), Farm to You is an exemplary demonstration of collaboration between state agencies, commodity and community partners with the common mission of delivering research-based information and programs to help Oklahoma youth address major health concerns that affect their quality of life. These concerns include increased rates of obesity, limited physical activity, low consumption of fruits and vegetables, high prevalence of tooth decay and a high rate of tobacco use among adolescents and teens. The educational initiative is designed to increase awareness of the relationships between agriculture, food and health.

The Farm to You program consists of a distinctive 40-foot-by-40-foot enclosed walk-through exhibit that travels throughout the state to scheduled community sites. The exhibit is quickly assembled with the help of school and community volunteers. At each of nine stations, students spend about six minutes participating in activities demonstrating where food grows, how food is used by the body to grow and develop, and how health habits keep the body healthy. Students meet Farmer Pete at the Cheeseburger Farm where MyPyramid foods are grown. They follow that food to the market to investigate Nutrition Facts labels, and then go on to the Healthy Cool Café where they take responsibility for choosing a variety of healthy foods. The adventure continues through an oversized mouth where they practice flossing, then travel through the digestive system, muscles, bones and skin where they engage in activities to reinforce desired health behaviors. The project has reached more than 31,000 schoolchildren statewide.

The Dr. Rodney Huey Memorial Champion of Oklahoma Health award will be accepted at the 2010 Champions of Health Awards Ceremony and Dinner, 6 p.m., Oct. 18 at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. Winners will be honored in five categories: Children’s Health, the Uninsured, Senior Health, Community Health and Corporate Health.

Reservations to the Champions of Health awards ceremony and dinner are available for \$50 each and may be purchased through Wednesday, Oct. 6 by calling 1-866-876-4376.

Table sponsorships for the event are available and benefit the Oklahoma Caring Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization which provides Oklahoma children with free immunizations and basic access to health care. For more information about sponsorships or the awards ceremony and dinner, go to championsofhealth.org.

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CHAMPIONS OF HEALTH WINNERS ADD ONE

The Champions of Health awards program is presented by the following partner organizations: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Hospital Association, the Oklahoma Osteopathic Association, the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Oklahoma State Medical Association.

As Champion of Oklahoma Health, Farm to You receives a grant of \$2,500. Four other Champions also will be honored and each awarded a \$1,000 contribution to their organization or program:

Champion of the Uninsured – Rylyn Meacham Center, Bethany – The Rylyn Meacham Center is a non-profit, community-based program designed to provide free therapy resources for those with neurological conditions, such as strokes and brain injuries, as well as other illnesses or injuries. The center assists Oklahoma residents who have exhausted insurance benefits and are not receiving services from any other source. Services include occupational and physical therapy, speech-language pathology, prosthetic/orthotic consultation, equipment evaluation, supply and equipment issue, resource education and referral services.

Champion of Senior Health –RSVP of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma City – Since 1995, RSVP’s Provide-A-Ride program has ensured senior citizens have accessible, free transportation to medical appointments. Many senior citizens do not have routine medical checkups or necessary medical treatments, simply because they do not have transportation. Volunteers provide transportation to these seniors as needed, on their own time, and at no cost.

Community Health Champion – Oklahoma Area Health Education Centers at the Center for Rural Health Sciences, OSU Center for Health Sciences, Tulsa – Oklahomans living with cancer in rural areas have fewer opportunities to access cancer information in their own communities than those who live in urban areas. In response, the Cancer Survivorship Education Program funded by the Lance Armstrong Foundation was designed to provide local access to cancer resources including workshops, targeted communications with rural health care providers and referral information for patients.

Corporate Health Champion – OU Physicians, Oklahoma City – OU Physicians implemented a comprehensive health program for employees called OU Fit. The program offers incentives to encourage employees to invest in their own health. In addition, they created a counterpart program, Live to Give, to encourage employees to become involved in projects that benefit the community. Over the course of the program, OU Fit participants have collectively lost more than 2,000 pounds, and have volunteered hundreds of hours to various community projects.

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