



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fort Collins Leaders Commission Blue Ribbon Task Force to Set Standards of Excellence for Character Development in Youth Sports

Fort Collins, Colorado – The **Colorado State University Athletic Department**, the **City of Fort Collins** and **Poudre School District** have commissioned a ‘Blue Ribbon Task Force’ from a broad spectrum of community sectors to establish standards of excellence for character development in youth sports. The Blue Ribbon Task Force will establish standards and make recommendations for a community-wide program that will manage and award a “mark of distinction” to coaches, teams and organizations that meet and exceed ‘character development excellence’ standards established by the task force.

CSU Athletic Director Mark Driscoll, Fort Collins City Manager Darin Atteberry and PSD Superintendent Jerry Wilson will kick off the Blue Ribbon Task Force’s efforts at an orientation meeting **Tuesday, January 31, at 8 a.m., in the Hall of Fame room at CSU’s Moby Gym**. Subsequent working sessions have been scheduled during which the task force will determine standards. The Blue Ribbon Task Force will announce the results of its efforts during **The 2006 Family & Youth Summit**, hosted by the Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County (HCC), on Saturday, April 22, 2006, at The Ranch.

HCC has partnered with **Character Fort Collins (CFC)** to organize the working sessions and manage administrative details of the standards-development process. Both organizations began pursuing individual “character in youth sports” projects and later joined forces.

“Youth sports are a perfect environment for teaching and modeling good character which is the foundation for all lasting success,” said Bob Powell, CFC president. “Our youth need to internalize the connection between good character and competence and skills, and learn to apply them in their future careers and relationships.”

“We are lucky to live in a community that values youth and is highly collaborative in terms of creating community solutions for all its citizens,” added Jep Enck, HCC president. “Developing internal assets like integrity, honesty and responsibility are critical for youth. This mark of distinction is one way our community is voicing that ‘We care about kids and their futures!’”

HCC and the CSU Department of Research and Development conducted an opinion poll to determine the state of existing character standards and actual behaviors in local youth sports. This research, alongside national reports and trends, will be evaluated by the Blue Ribbon Task Force as part of the process.

For more information about the Blue Ribbon Task Force or the orientation meeting, please contact Kim Sharpe, HCC coordinator, at (970) 495-7503. For more information about The Summit, contact Sharpe or visit www.healthylarimer.org.

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The Healthier Communities Coalition of Larimer County is an alliance of nonprofit, education, health, business, government and citizen leaders who collaboratively identify, develop and implement strategies to improve the health and well-being of county residents. Established in 1994 and located in Fort Collins, Colorado, HCC’s special focus since 2002 has been on improving the lives of our youth.