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Fit for Our Future Gala and Surgeon General Showcase DC Student Efforts to Combat Obesity *Leaders in the Restaurant Industry and Sports Community Also Honored*

(Washington, DC) Community leaders, advocates, teachers, students, and others will be joined by Surgeon General Dr. Regina M. Benjamin at the Discovery Communications Global Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD, for the first-ever "Fit for Our Future Gala" on Thursday, December 6. The Discovery Channel and the Campaign to End Obesity will recognize and award efforts by students at three DC public schools to combat obesity through education. The event will feature a video competition in which students attempt to educate their peers about steps they can take to prevent or address obesity and the pervasiveness of this disease.

The video competition is a collaboration between the Discovery Channel and Washington, DC public high schools to develop short films highlighting efforts underway at their schools and their communities to stay healthy and fit. At the Gala, finalists from three schools – Ballou High School, Eastern High School and McKinley Technology High School – will premier their videos to an invited audience. The winning school will receive a cash prize from the Campaign and their video will be featured on the Discovery Channel Website.

Dr. Benjamin, the 18th Surgeon General of the United States, advocates for a national conversation on obesity stressing a positive message about being healthy and being fit.

"Discovery Channel and Discovery Education are proud to host the Fit for Our Future Gala," said Dr. John Whyte an original member of the Campaign's Board of Directors. "Obesity is a multifaceted issue that impacts families, educators, health care providers and entire communities. The Campaign to End Obesity is an important organization that effectively elevates policy discussions with a variety of stakeholders and federal policy makers."

Whyte, the Chief Medical Expert and Vice President, Health and Medical Education at Discovery Channel, will be joined at the Gala by other Board members including Campaign to End Obesity Co-Founder Stephanie Silverman and Jeff Poltawsky of the American Family Children's Hospital.

The Fit for Our Future Gala will also recognize two individuals from the area who have shown special dedication and commitment to combating obesity in America. The honorees, Ed Foster-Simeon of the United States Soccer Foundation and Dawn Sweeney from the National Restaurant Association, will be recognized as "leaders who are willing to back up their words

with actions,” Silverman said. “Dawn and Ed and their organizations have made important contributions at the local level and across the nation to improve access for all Americans to healthy food choices and fun, healthful physical activity opportunities.”

Citing a new Gallup Poll showing more Americans say obesity is the most urgent health problem facing the United States, climbing to a new high of 16 percent compared to just 1 percent in 1999; Silverman said, “the timing of the Fit for Our Future Gala could not be more relevant. American’s are more aware than ever that the nation must have policies to improve obesity prevention and treatment.”

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About the Campaign to End Obesity

The effects of the nation’s obesity epidemic are immense: taxpayers, businesses, communities and individuals spend hundreds of billions of dollars each year due to obesity, including an estimated \$168 billion in medical costs. By bringing together leaders from across industry, academia and public health with policymakers and their advisors, the Campaign to End Obesity provides the information and guidance that decision-makers need to make the changes necessary to reverse one of the nation’s costliest and most prevalent diseases.