

RELEASE FOR NRPA VOLUNTEERS TO SEND TO LOCAL MEDIA

FOR RELEASE: (DATE)

CONTACT: (NAME)
(PHONE)

**(NAME OF PARK/REC CENTER) PART OF INNOVATIVE STATE-WIDE PROGRAM
TO HELP NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTS PREVENT HEART DISEASE**

A new state-wide program to teach and encourage heart-healthy habits for children and adults will be launched DATE in parks and recreation centers throughout North Carolina, including NAME OF PARK/REC CENTER. On DATE, NAME OF PARK/REC CENTER will conduct NAME OR TYPE OF EVENT, BRIEF DESCRIPTION.

The program, *Hearts N' Parks Y2K*, is the result of a partnership between the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), in collaboration with NC State University. Its purpose is to increase the number of children and adults, including seniors, who engage in regular, moderate-intensity physical activity and follow a heart healthy eating plan, and to demonstrate the positive impact that community park and recreation departments can have upon the adoption of such healthy behaviors. After this summer's launch in North Carolina, program officials expect to expand *Hearts N' Parks Y2K* to parks and recreation centers throughout the United States.

"Regular physical activity and heart healthy eating habits are key to preventing and controlling overweight and obesity, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol -- major risk factors for cardiovascular disease," said Karen Donato, coordinator of the NHLBI Obesity

Education Initiative. "NHLBI recognizes the many ways that community park and recreation departments positively affect the well-being of people, and we are extremely pleased to join with NRPA to launch *Hearts N' Parks Y2K* in North Carolina," Ms. Donato said.

Nationally, about 6 million Americans have heart disease and 500,000 die each year of heart attack. The statistics for North Carolina are equally troubling: **XX** North Carolinians have heart disease and **XX** die of heart attack each year.

The risk factors for heart disease that individuals can control include cigarette smoking, obesity, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and physical inactivity. Even if a person has heart disease or a family history of heart disease, there are steps he or she can take to prevent or control the condition.

"This is a very important and exciting program and NAME OF PARK/REC CENTER is delighted to be a part of it," said NAME OF LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE. "Heart disease is such a major health problem that we are happy to play a role in helping people learn how to prevent and control it. We feel confident that the residents of AREA will learn a lot while having a great time in our facility," HE/SHE added.

The activities and events that will be occurring this summer as part of *Hearts N' Parks Y2K* will emphasize the importance of leading a heart-healthy lifestyle from childhood through old age. Participants will learn how to incorporate at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity into their lives on most -- and preferably all -- days of the week. They also will learn how to develop and follow an eating plan that balances calories consumed with calories used and is low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, and high in fruits and vegetables, lowfat dairy products and whole grains.

By participating in *Hearts N' Parks Y2K* adults and seniors will discover that just 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day can have a powerful effect on reducing their heart disease risk. Importantly, those 30 minutes can be accomplished in 10- or 15-minute segments.

Since children learn from their parents' examples, parents will learn how to develop a physical activity program for themselves, as well as to engage their children in everyday activities that burn calories and encourage active play. They also will be provided with tips about adopting heart healthy eating behaviors for the entire family. Seniors also will learn that it's never too late to adopt heart healthy behaviors and that regular physical activity and heart healthy eating are important for everyone.

(If local partner involved): NAME OF LOCAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION is working with NAME OF PARK/REC CENTER to support the DATE kick-off of *Hearts N' Parks Y2K*.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has been helping Americans and people worldwide stay healthier since 1948. The NHLBI undertakes a wide range of activities to improve the understanding, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart, lung, and blood disorders.

The National Recreation and Park Association supports the delivery of quality park and recreation resources through a nationwide network of recreation and park professionals and citizen advocates. The primary areas for national programs focus are health, youth development, and the environment.

For more information visit the NHLBI website at www.nhlbi.nih.gov and the NRPA website at www.nrpa.org.

[IN RELEASE EMPHASIZING EVENT FOR KIDS, INSERT BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF KID-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES AND FOLLOWING AFTER LOCAL REP'S QUOTE:

Children also can have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. Research shows that the buildup of plaque in the arteries (atherosclerosis), which causes coronary heart disease, begins in adolescence. Thus, it is important to start heart healthy behaviors early in childhood.]

[IN RELEASE EMPHASIZING EVENT FOR SENIORS, INSERT BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EVENT AND FOLLOWING AFTER LOCAL REP'S QUOTE: Seniors

need to stay physically active not only to help prevent heart disease but also to help slow bone loss and prevent fractures from osteoporosis. Activities that build balance and strength are particularly important for senior citizens.]