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LISC Applauds Administration's Let's Move Initiative, Calls Comprehensive Community Revitalization a Key to Answering Children's Health, Obesity Challenges

NEW YORK (February 17, 2010)--The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) applauds the White House plan to promote healthy lifestyles among children through the Let's Move program announced by the First Lady this week.

LISC is particularly concerned about children in low-income communities, where fresh produce and other healthy offerings are often expensive or nonexistent, and where recreational facilities, sports programs and green space are more likely to be unsafe or unavailable.

"To focus on the health of our children we also need to think about the health of the communities in which they live," noted Michael Rubinger, LISC president and CEO. "Food deserts make it very difficult for parents to offer kids nutritional food that helps them succeed in school and grow," he said. "Parks marked by violence and decay instead of football fields and playgrounds discourage active lifestyles. And public schools saddled with budget cuts and deteriorating facilities are often forced to curtail the P.E. and sports programs young people need.

"All of those are connected," he continued, "and it takes a flexible, integrated solution focused on the local needs of at-risk families and communities if we are really to help our kids reach their full potential," he said.

LISC has been active in all these areas for many years, supporting urban farms and new grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods dominated by fast food restaurants and convenience stores; partnering on restored city parks, new athletic fields and indoor recreational facilities in areas battling long-term blight; and funding new schools and educational programs that target the needs of underserved youth.

It's all part of LISC's *Building Sustainable Communities* initiative, which takes a comprehensive approach to revitalizing distressed neighborhoods. LISC links its work to support affordable housing with efforts to expand access to quality education, and to develop healthy lifestyles and environments, and to stimulate economic development, and to create jobs and help low-income families build assets. "This is a holistic, quality-of-life approach to community development," he said. "Each aspect reinforces the others."

Rubinger also cited the overwhelming success of the public-private partnerships that have already helped create healthier communities. "Federal leadership and support is

tremendous,” he noted, commending the First Lady for her high-profile role in the Let’s Move initiative. “It reinforces efforts at the local level, where we can all have enormous impact. It’s the only way we can respond to the needs of families in San Diego’s Colina Park neighborhood, even if they are different than those in New York’s Harlem, or Houston’s Near Northside, or Chicago’s Englewood, or Providence’s Olneyville. All kids, regardless of their economic background, deserve the chance to be healthy. We are thrilled to see Michelle Obama help take the lead on this.”

About LISC

LISC combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources to help community-based organizations revitalize underserved neighborhoods. Since 1980, LISC has raised more than \$9.6 billion to build or rehabilitate more than 254,000 affordable homes and develop 38 million square feet of retail, community and educational space nationwide. For more information, visit www.lisc.org.

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