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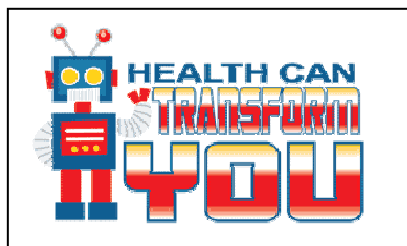
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Mikki Stier, Senior Vice President
External and Government Relations
Broadlawns Medical Center
515-282-2449 or mstier@broadlawns.org

Jill Whitson
Executive Director
Central Iowa AHEC
515-282-5721 or jwhitson@broadlawns.org

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TAUGHT YOUNGER STUDENTS ABOUT HEALTHY CHOICES
CIAHEC and BGM Schools Partner on Health Program

DES MOINES, Iowa (July 8, 2010) -- In a semester-long project with the Central Iowa Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), BGM high school students learned about careers in healthcare and the elementary students learned how to make healthier choices in eating and exercising. The 22 high school



students created the *Health Can Transform You* campaign as they were paired with 48 third grade students once a week during the second semester of the school year.

"The core purpose of AHEC is to improve access to health care in rural areas, and Iowa has several rural areas that are highly underserved by healthcare professionals," explained **Jill Whitson, MPH, executive director** of the Central Iowa Area Health Education

Center. "This program served two purposes. It nurtured interest in healthcare careers among the high school students, while at the same time it helped the younger students understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise."

Central Iowa AHEC, in partnership with Iowa State University Extension Office, implemented the Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC) curriculum at Brooklyn Guernsey Malcom (BGM) High School, located in the rural town of Brooklyn, Iowa, in Poweshiek County. The students chose to focus on prevention of childhood obesity in hopes of educating BGM's elementary students about healthy eating habits. Through the "Health Can Transform You" campaign, the high school students began reaching out to the younger students by designing posters to create awareness of healthy and unhealthy foods. Students studied nutrition through individual research and presentations from community guest speakers. The older students also



Derek Evans, third grade student at BMG, learned about healthy snacks through the CIAHEC program.

developed hands-on activities using the five food groups to motivate their protégés into thinking about healthy eating habits while having fun.

"Overall, I think it was a hit!" said Diane Lastovka, family and consumer science teacher BGM High School. "It was interesting to see the older students learning about working with younger ones, especially being able to evaluate what they did and how they could do things a little differently to get a more acceptable outcome."

The high school students ended the semester by hosting a health fair, creating and operating stations for the elementary students, including: healthy, tasty and easy after school snacks; a game of Jeopardy focusing on the five food groups and activities that will get the third and fourth graders hopping, skipping, running and jumping.

When asked what he liked best about this project, BMG junior Bradley Blake said he enjoyed "helping children learn through games and other activities."

The Central Iowa AHEC opened its doors in November 2008 in Broadlawns Medical Center in Des Moines and serves Boone, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie, Jasper, Polk, Poweshiek and Story counties. To learn more about the Central Iowa Area Health Education Centers, please visit www.centraliowaahhec.org.

Broadlawns Medical Center first opened its doors as a hospital to the residents of Polk County on April 13, 1924. Over the years, Broadlawns has adapted to the changing demands of public health care, yet remained true to its mission of offering quality health services to all Polk County residents and training tomorrow's health care professionals. Today Broadlawns Medical Center is composed of:

- An acute care community hospital serving medical, surgical, mental health and primary care needs
- A 60-member physician practice overseeing numerous specialty clinics and outpatient services
- A Family Medicine Residency Program that graduates physician leaders who today serve in 22 of Iowa's 99 counties