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LFF Names Winning *Fit for Life* Libraries

17 Library Systems to Receive Grants from MetLife Foundation for “Brain Health” Programs

NEW YORK, NY – June 18, 2008—In recognition of the growing role of libraries in providing free, reliable health information, the national non-profit organization Libraries for the Future (LFF) has selected 17 library systems to launch *Fit for Life* programming to address physical and brain health across the lifespan. The grants provide tools and training for the libraries to develop programming and community awareness to boost healthy habits in urban areas, where a significant number of residents lack access to reliable health care and health information.

The *Fit for Life* grants, ranging from \$10,000 - \$25,000, were made possible by the generous support of MetLife Foundation. Libraries participating in *Fit for Life* will receive three days of training in New York City this September and then run programs in their communities from January 2009-January 2010. All *Fit for Life* programs will focus on five pillars of brain health that have emerged from the latest scientific research: diet, physical exercise, intellectual challenge, mental stimulation through new experiences, and socialization.

“We are proud to partner with MetLife Foundation on this important initiative,” said Bruce Astrein, executive director of Libraries for the future. “Libraries have always been about healthy minds. Now they can do even more to build healthy bodies and healthy communities by making it easy for people find—and use—the latest information on physical health and brain health. All the winning libraries have great ideas for helping to create healthy habits that are also fun.”

The Winning Libraries

Libraries from across the nation submitted proposals to Libraries for the Future for the competitive grants. Highlights from winning proposals include:

- a “Brain Blast-Off” at the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library in Alabama, where program partner NASA (operator of the nearby Space & Rocket Center) will provide astronauts to help present “Fit as an Astronaut,” “Space-Age Picnic” and other programs to explore “mental and physical well-being as essential for training astronauts for success”;
- Monthly tie-ins to local events at the Orange County Library System in Florida, such as “Lunch Lessons for Back to School” in September and “Jump into June” featuring the National Jump Rope finalists, who will be in Orlando for the 2009 championships;
- “Yoga for everyone on the roof” in Toledo; “cooking for one” for teens and seniors in Delaware County PA; and a partnership with Save Mart Supermarkets in Fresno CA that will include “Healthy Body = Healthy Brain” goody bags for students;
- Partnerships with hospitals, universities, radio and tv stations, YMCAs, senior centers, daycare centers, public schools, food banks, and many local, city and state agencies.

In all, the 17 library systems will receive a total of \$292,000 of regrants from MetLife Foundation, to be administered by Libraries for the Future. Direct participants include 251 library branches, reaching a service population of 6.9 million. The number of beneficiaries will be still higher as each library partners with a minimum of five community organizations and launches a public awareness campaign around the five pillars of brain health.

(Continued)

The winning library systems are:

Cleveland Public Library, OH
Delaware County Library System, PA
Fresno County Public Library, CA
Gadsden Etowah County Public Library, AL
Huntsville-Madison County Public Library, AL
Jefferson County Library Cooperative, AL
Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, KS
Milwaukee Public Library/ Milwaukee Public Library Foundation, WI
Orange County Library System, FL
Peabody Institute Library, MA
Pioneer Library System, OK
Pleasanton Public Library, CA
Rancho Cucamonga Public Library Services, CA
Santa Clara County Library, CA
South San Francisco Public Library, CA
Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, OH
Upper Hudson Library System, NY

Fit for Life History

Fit for Life is a new, enhanced program building on two earlier co-ventures between Libraries for the Future and MetLife Foundation. The original *Fit for Life* offered library-based fitness programming and promotion for teens and their families, while the pilot project *Get Real Get Fit* showed the power of libraries to involve teens in fitness programs that extend beyond the library's walls.

In partnership with MetLife Foundation, LFF created the all-new *Fit for Life* to expand the target audience beyond teens to the full lifespan, and beyond physical health to the emerging field of brain health. There is a growing body of scientific and medical knowledge on the importance of brain health, but few channels for communicating new findings to the public. LFF will engage the assistance of the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, a nonprofit organization of more than 265 leading neuroscientists, to ensure that *Fit for Life* reflects the most accurate, up-to-the-minute research findings to support physical and brain health across the lifespan.

“MetLife Foundation is committed to health education, both physical fitness and brain health, for people of all ages,” said Sibyl Jacobson, President and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “We are proud to partner with Libraries for the Future on *Fit for Life*, which demonstrates the Foundation's commitment to providing the public with knowledge that can help people not only live longer, but live better.”

The *Fit for Life* website (www.fitforlifelibraries.org) will offer detailed information on each program component, as well as activities for library participants and all web users, as the program gets underway in early 2009.

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About Libraries for the Future

Libraries for the Future is a national nonprofit organization that supports innovation and investment in America's libraries. Through its cutting-edge programs, research, regrants, and trainings, LFF helps local libraries address the ever-changing needs of their communities. For more information, please visit www.lff.org.

About the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives

The Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives is a nonprofit organization of more than 265 leading neuroscientists who are committed to advancing public awareness about the progress and promise of brain research and to



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disseminating information about the brain in an accessible fashion. The Dana Alliance, supported entirely by the Dana Foundation, does not fund research or make grants. For more information, please visit <http://www.dana.org/danaalliances/about/>

About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was established by MetLife to continue the company's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation supports programs that improve education, promote health, encourage parental involvement and family engagement, help revitalize neighborhoods and stress accessibility and inclusion. In recent years, a focus on Alzheimer's and aging issues has been added. MetLife Foundation stresses education in all its programs. Recognizing the vital role the arts play in building communities and educating young people, the Foundation contributes to arts and cultural organizations across the United States, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities for young people, reaching broad audiences through inclusive programming, and making arts more accessible for all people. For more information about the Foundation, please visit www.metlife.org.

For more information, please contact:

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