

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Garland ISD has been a fundamental part of the March of Dimes fundraising arena since they joined the WalkAmerica program in 2002. Every year, the participation within the school district has grown dramatically, encompassing students, faculty and administration. Their success has continued to grow annually as well; seen in the dramatic increases in the amount of money raised each year.

In 2006, participants banded together to raise over \$115,000, ranking them at the pinnacle of all national school districts for WalkAmerica fundraising. The following year, they sponsored fundraisers such as Taters for Tots, WalkMania and Blue Jeans for Babies, drawing upon the community's support for their success. 2007 also saw the introduction of the new fundraiser "The Great GISD BBQ Smackdown". Coordinated by Eva Hummel, the barbecue cook-off allowed the local mayors of Garland, Rowlett and Sachse to compete against the Garland ISD Superintendent, Dr. Curtis Culwell, before a panel of celebrity judges. Everyone participated – students, faculty, and administrators alike – fostering a community spirit of fun and camaraderie. Garland ISD went above and beyond anything they have done before, and raised nearly \$145,000 in 2007.

The effort is lead by Dr. Curtis Culwell, Garland ISD Superintendent, himself the father of premature twins. His personal connection to the March of Dimes mission inspires the faculty, staff and students of Garland ISD, leading them to rank at the top Dallas' WalkAmerica fundraising teams, including Bank of America, FedEx Kinkos, Macy's and Citigroup.

WalkAmerica, the March of Dimes biggest fund-raising event, will take place April 19, 2008 at Norbuck Park, White Rock Lake, to help the March of Dimes fight prematurity – a growing crisis that now affects half-a-million babies born in the U.S. every year. The number of babies born prematurely each year has increased by 30 percent since 1983. In Texas, 53,162 babies were born prematurely in 2003. Premature birth is the leading killer of newborns and a major cause of disabilities.

The March of Dimes is a national voluntary health agency whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. Founded in 1938, the March of Dimes funds programs of research, community services, education, and advocacy to save babies and in 2003 launched a campaign to address the increasing rate of premature birth. For more information, visit the March of Dimes Web site at marchofdimes.com or its Spanish Web site at nacersano.org.

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