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My Heart. My Life.

Bringing Back the Farm:

Moss Haven Elementary Breaks Ground on AHA Teaching Garden

RICHARDSON, Mar. 6, 2012 – Childhood obesity is one of our nation’s most urgent health threats. Today, one in three children and adolescents in the U.S. is overweight or obese. To help counter this, the **American Heart Association** has launched its *Teaching Gardens* program to educate elementary students about the importance of fruits and vegetables, to energize and excite them about produce, and introduce fresh produce into the diets of students and their families. On **Friday, Mar. 23 at 8:00 a.m.**, the **AHA** and Moss Haven Elementary School of Richardson ISD will break ground on their first *Teaching Garden* – the Moss Haven Farm.

Moss Haven Elementary sits on land that was formerly part of Moss Farm Ranch where Harry S. Moss’ racehorses roamed free. Now the school will be allocating part of the school grounds to a rich and fruitful educational experience with an Outdoor Learning Environment. This unique Teaching Garden will be one of only 68 sites in the country sponsored by the **AHA**.

The goal is to allow each student the opportunity to cultivate and grow his/her own plant with dedicated garden beds for each class. Research from the **AHA** shows that children are more willing to try vegetables if they grow them and adults living in the household are 3.5 times more likely to consume fruits and vegetables at least five times daily. Among children today, obesity is causing a broad range of health problems that previously weren’t seen until adulthood such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, asthma, sleep apnea and elevated cholesterol. Teaching students about the importance of healthy diet that includes fruits and vegetables is just one part of the **AHA’s My Heart. My Life.** platform.

WHAT: Groundbreaking of Moss Haven Farm, an AHA *Teaching Garden*
WHEN: Friday, Mar. 23 at 8:00 a.m.
WHERE: Moss Haven Elementary
9202 Moss Farm Lane, Dallas, TX 75243
(469) 593-2200 – main school number
WHO: Moss Haven Elementary School and the American Heart Association



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The garden will focus on 100% organic gardening while using a sustainable water source. In addition to curriculum and planting modules provided by the **AHA**, the school has also received a \$1300 grant from REAL School Gardens towards the water harvest system and has already secured a 1000 gallon galvanized steel water tower complete with hand pump to provide water sustainability. All garden beds will include a unique sub-irrigation planter to minimize water needs while maximizing plant growth during record heat and drought months.

The school is also teaming with Texas A&M Agrilife Research and Extension to track and survey the Farm's influence on students' interests in gardens, nutrition and eco-sustainability. The school has also identified "green" teachers at each grade level to prepare teaching curriculum for our students in their farm. To make journaling and visiting the Farm more comfortable for students, the school has procured tree stumps to use as an outdoor seating. Additional gardening supplies such as wheelbarrows, rakes, etc. can be donated to the school to help in their efforts to make this a permanent fixture for years to come. To donate supplies, please email MossHavenFarm@gmail.com.

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or join us, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or any of our offices around the country, or visit www.heart.org.

About My Heart. My Life.

The American Heart Association's My Heart. My Life. Is a comprehensive new health, wellness and fitness platform to empower Americans to get healthier. It's an important component of the American Heart Association's sweeping 20-year goal: to improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent and to reduce deaths from cardiovascular disease and stroke by 20 percent by the year 2020. For more information, visit www.myheartmylife.org.

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