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**ArCOP Recognizes 34 Growing Healthy Classrooms**

JANUARY 11, 2017 (LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS) – The Arkansas Coalition for Obesity

Prevention (ArCOP) is proud to announce that 29 early childcare classroom teachers and 5 elementary classroom teachers have been recognized as Growing Healthy Classrooms. This distinction is awarded to teachers who have created a healthy and safe learning environment for students in their classrooms.

ArCOP, alongside its state partners and through its workgroup teams, aims to improve the health of all Arkansas communities by increasing physical activity and healthy eating to reduce and prevent obesity. The ArCOP Early Childhood and Schools Team encourages all Arkansas schools and school districts to collaborate with parents and communities to create a unified environment that promotes healthy eating and physical activity for children from birth through the 12th grade.

Seven early childcare and elementary classrooms received recognition as Emerging by poising themselves to make healthy changes by laying a strong, team-based foundation:

                Amy Turner, Lavaca Elementary School, Lavaca

                Stacy Reed, Meadow Park Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

    Ashley McFadden & Adrienne Durham, Meadow Park Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Brenda Warner, Seventh Street Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Charity Tuberville, Glenview Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Elizabeth Jackson, Glenview Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Randi Shipman, Seventh Street Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

Sixteen classrooms demonstrated that they are building upon their strong foundations. These communities were recognized as Blossoming Classrooms:

                Stephanie Daniel & Linda Smith, Meadow Park Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Jessica Miller, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

 LaCher Rockins, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Tiffany Bullock, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Maribel Siems, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Jessica England, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Terri Felton, Amboy Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Tanya Lewis, Glenview Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Whitney Addie, Glenview Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Sarah Webb & Kristen Valley, Boone Park Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Jan Southwell, Boone Park Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Telicia Smedley & Tomeka Moore, Boone Park Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Calesha Franklin, Amboy Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Twyla Nichols, Nashville Elementary, Nashville

                Brandy Freyaldenhoven, Lamar Elementary, Lamar

                Nicole Battjes, Walter Turnbow Elementary, Springdale

Finally, eleven classrooms were recognized as Thriving Classrooms for demonstrating their efforts of making health and safety and priority in their classroom environment.

                Michelle Needler, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Danniell Homan, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Amy Preston, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Susan Urena, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Lauren Broach and Felecia Butler-Bean, Glenview Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Sarah Harrell, Glenview Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Rosalynd Guiden, Glenview Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Megan Wilson & Debra Holmes, Pike View Early Childhood Center, North Little Rock

                Jenny Cowling, Harrison Preschool, Harrison

                Natalie Rhodes-Warren, Glenview Elementary, North Little Rock

                Anita Patton, Lamar Elementary, Lamar

These communities will be recognized as ArCOP’s Growing Healthy Classrooms for 2016. All classrooms interested in being recognized for their efforts towards better health in 2017 will be welcome to submit their application later this year.

ArCOP is dedicated to improving the health of all Arkansas communities by increasing access to physical activity and healthy eating to reduce and prevent obesity. Through programming, training, and funding opportunities, the Coalition works towards its goal to increase the percentage of Arkansans of all ages who have access to healthy and affordable food and who engage in regular physical activity.

Questions regarding the Growing Healthy Classroom recognition program may be directed to Amy Routt, Early Childhood & Schools Workgroup Chair, at aroutt@aetn.org. Questions regarding the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention (ArCOP) may be directed to Katrina Betancourt, ArCOP President, at katrina.betancourt@arkansasobesity.org.