



It's about choice. It's your thing. Find your Balance.

I-CAAN Launches *nrg* – Powered by Choice Cause Campaign for Teens *Empowering the Millennial Generation to Voice their Choice for Healthy Eating & Active Living*

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(Harrisburg, PA) – Pennsylvania's teens, part of the civic-minded Millennial Generation, now have a new cause to get behind, with today's launch of ***nrg* – Powered by Choice**, a youth-led energy balance campaign developed by the Penn State Institute for the Collective Advancement of Activity and Nutrition (I-CAAN). The campaign is funded by the Highmark Foundation through the Highmark Healthy High 5 initiative.

nrg (text lingo for "energy") empowers teens aged 13-18 to lead changes that support a balance of healthy eating and active lifestyle choices in schools and communities. The campaign provides adult leaders (teachers, group advisors) with a framework to engage teen groups in these healthy change efforts, and will also recognize and reward groups for their *nrg* activities. Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA – www.panaonline.org) will pilot the *nrg* campaign throughout the entire state in 2007-08, with national expansion planned for 2008-09.

More than 260 advisors from over 50 counties have already signed on to the *nrg* cause, and with today's statewide launch, teens from across the Commonwealth are being asked to do the same at www.poweredbychoice.org. To find an *nrg* group near you, you can search by county at <http://www.poweredbychoice.org/about/where.php>.

Responding to an increased public focus on the causes of and solutions to the alarming rise in childhood obesity, organizations like the Highmark Foundation have joined government and community partners around the state to begin reversing this trend and restoring a more healthy balance for kids and families.

The *nrg* campaign is a nutrition and physical activity program of Highmark Healthy High 5 (www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org), a five-year, \$100 million investment of the Highmark Foundation to improve the health and well-being of children aged 6-18. The Highmark Foundation's funding of the campaign will support teen and advisor participation, as well as two \$500 mini-grants (one school-based & one community-based) awarded per county, within the Foundation's 49-county service area in Pennsylvania.

"Millennial teens get behind causes where they feel personally responsible and believe they can make a real difference," said Allison Topper, executive director of both I-CAAN and PANA. "This innovative campaign provides teens with a positive outlet to channel their '*nrg*' and ideas for improved nutrition and physical activity choices, and then promote this cause through their social networks using technology. When teens lead the way, it creates ownership and a personal connection to the cause, producing greater support for the resulting changes."

"One of the major goals of Highmark Healthy High 5 is to address the critical issue of childhood obesity," said Kweilin Nassar, Highmark Healthy High 5 project director. "At this age, teens are more influenced by their peers. The *nrg* campaign is a unique approach where teens can lead and create solutions – aimed at improving the physical activity and nutritional habits of their peers – which can improve their health long-term."

Conducted via live webcast, the statewide *nrg* campaign launch will be shown from 9 a.m. to noon at 29 site locations across Pennsylvania to teens, educators, and community group members. A link to the webcast, as well archived video segments for later viewing, can be found at www.poweredbychoice.org. The *nrg* campaign is available for use throughout the entire state.

The webcast will also contain a sneak preview of the *nrg* Summit event, scheduled for September 25, 2007, which will bring teens, organizations, industry, and technology together around this cutting-edge cause campaign for creating change, energy balance, and choice. The summit, *nrg* = *Teens x (Industry + Technology)*, will be held at the Willow Valley Resort and Conference Center in Lancaster, PA.

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nrg = energy

www.poweredbychoice.org