

News from the Stamford Public Schools

For immediate release

June 19, 2007

Contact: Sarah Arnold, Public Affairs Officer (203) 977-4095

**LOCAL FOUNDATION FUNDS OPENING OF FITNESS
CENTERS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN STAMFORD**

The Stamford Public Schools will open fitness centers at Stamford High School and Westhill High School for the 2007-2008 school year, thanks to an \$80,000 donation from the Alexandra and Steven Cohen Foundation, in conjunction with Stamford Hospital.

The fitness centers are designed to encourage a life-long commitment to exercise for students who currently do not participate in organized sports or who may not work out regularly on their own. Generally speaking, teenagers across the country are less active than a generation ago because they spend more time at the computer and playing video games.

“We want to promote physical, emotional, and spiritual health in our young people and this is a big step toward that effort,” said Dr. Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools. “I am extremely grateful to the Alexandra and Steven Cohen Foundation and to Stamford Hospital for the generous donation of \$40,000 to each of our comprehensive high schools to get this initiative started.”

The funds will be used to create health club-type facilities in both schools. Each location will be equipped with new treadmills, stationary bikes, rowing machines, elliptical machines, and free weights, as well as music and tv screens.

“This effort shows how the Stamford Public Schools, working with Stamford Hospital and local benefactors, can find ways to improve children’s health,” said Dr. Edward Schuster, a member of the Stamford Hospital Foundation Board and a Stamford Hospital cardiologist. “This is the first generation that is not expected to live longer than their parents. Hopefully, we can change that.”

(continued)

Fitness Centers (2)

The fitness center concept is consistent with the district's current efforts to revamp student health and wellness. A committee recently was formed, consisting of administrators, physical education and health teachers, and representatives from Stamford Hospital, the Parent Teacher Council, Stamford Youth Foundation, the City's Department of Health, Student Health Services, and Sodexo School Services. The Committee will revise the physical education and health curriculums, update offerings in physical education programs, and improve the all-around health of every student.

Physical education teachers at Stamford High and Westhill are designing the fitness center programs, some of which will be available to students during the school day and others after school.

The Alexandra and Steven Cohen Foundation has sponsored several other health initiatives in the Stamford Public Schools. Those efforts include funding the Well Done after school cooking and nutrition program, establishing the Tully for Teens exercise and nutrition program, purchasing new supplies and equipment for school nurse offices, and providing free vaccinations for students traveling to Africa as part of the Rites of Passage program.

#