

## HealthCorps® Army Seeks to Advance Advocacy Efforts with Whole Health Education

**PRLog (Press Release) - Sep 22, 2011 - New York, NY & Wellesley, MA** -- An army is only as good as the training it receives. Early on in the non-profit's development, HealthCorps (<http://www.healthcorps.org>), a proactive health movement and vehicle for research, co-founded by Dr. Mehmet Oz and his wife Lisa Oz to fight child obesity, recognized the need for an educational program that would prepare their teen soldiers to become health agents of change for the fight against this national health crisis, working in high schools and at risk communities.

New HealthCorps Coordinators undergo month-long training on nutrition, fitness, mental resilience, how to run community initiatives, as well as classroom management and instructional skills. Recently, however, the organization saw the opportunity to make their program richer by enhancing their Coordinators' work as wellness advocates. Working with the National Institute of Whole Health (<http://www.niwh.org>), the entire HealthCorps army will soon become certified Whole Health Educators. Starting in December, they will hone their skills in such relevant disciplines as peer counseling, mindful listening, health sciences, behavioral engagement, cultural diversity and more.

"We want our Coordinators to be able to go to the next level by receiving training in wellness advocacy and peer mentorship, and the Whole Health Education with wellness coaching certification is providing that," said Michelle Bouchard, President of HealthCorps. "We like the multidimensional aspect of the National Institute of Whole Health's program, as well as the fact that our students can do it online when it's convenient for them. Our hope is that, as a result of this additional training, many of our Coordinators will go on to play a significant role in healthcare."

HealthCorps partnered with the National Institute of Whole Health (NIWH) to pilot the accredited, year-long Whole Health Education program. The NIWH Whole Health Education® with Behavioral Engagement™ is the first known first patient education and health behavior change model developed and utilized in clinical settings. It is designed to provide students with evidence-based health sciences, integrative nutrition information, natural health care perspectives, and Behavioral Engagement™ health behavior change skills to facilitate lifestyle changes.

"NIWH shares the compelling vision that HealthCorps and the Oz's have to transform the well-being of today's youth," said Dr. Georgianna Donadio, Program Director for NIWH. "We are pleased to participate in this great work of educating and empowering young people to choose healthier behaviors."

Jake Ross and Mary Kathryn Rains are two of a handful of Coordinators participating in a pilot program presently under way.

Mr. Ross, a HealthCorps Coordinator at New Utrecht High School in Brooklyn who will start a Ph.D. program for Psychology in the fall, considers his newfound knowledge to be a complement to his psychological studies. "The National Institute of Whole Health program has really helped me to get into my students' heads. The practical tips it provides has enabled me to connect with students on a much deeper level."

Ms. Rains, a HealthCorps Coordinator at Freedom High School in Tampa, Florida, has enjoyed a similar positive experience with NIWH and recently gained notoriety for her success in establishing a salad bar and organic garden at the school. "I am now able to tie everything together and take an integrative approach. It has really affected the way I communicate with people and relay health information to them." She plans to major in Public Health at Tulane in the fall.

Said Bouchard, "Not only does NIWH offer health education that is ideal for our Coordinators who work on a daily basis to empower teens to make lifestyle changes, but the information they impart is something everyone can apply to their own personal health. The curriculum has a unique approach to health by making it more human."

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#### About HealthCorps

HealthCorps® a 501 (C) 3 co-founded by heart surgeon and Emmy Award-winning talk show host Dr. Mehmet Oz and his wife Lisa, is building a movement to fight the childhood obesity crisis by helping Americans discover what they are really hungry for and why. HealthCorps "Coordinators" carry out unique in-school and community programming targeting high-need populations. Using peer-mentoring to deliver a progressive curriculum in nutrition, fitness and mental strength, HealthCorps Coordinators give teens purpose, help develop human character and inspire an interest in health and culinary arts careers. HealthCorps also serves as a unique research laboratory - exploring the complex, underlying causes of the obesity crisis and discovering and communicating solutions. HealthCorps is bringing many initiatives together to address the "Whole Child" and activate the students' mind, body and spirit. As a result, HealthCorps is transforming the educational paradigm one school at a time. The program network spans 54 schools in 13 states. For more information, please visit.

#### About the National Institute of Whole Health

Founded in 1977 and headquartered in Wellesley, MA, the National Institute of Whole Health (NIWH) offers the most respected and credentialed integrative, whole health certification programs in the US. NIWH's offerings include the Norman Cousins Award nominated Best Practice Whole Health Education certification program. The Whole Health Educator program for

Nurses, endorsed by the American Holistic Nurses Association along with the Whole Health Nutrition Educator certification program and Whole Health Coaching certification program, can be completed via on-line distance learning. Recognized nationally as the pioneers of Whole Health Education®, the school has instructed thousands of students from varying health occupations from all over the U.S., and now offers on-line distance learning with students located on five continents. For more information, visit [www.niwh.org](http://www.niwh.org) or call (888) 354-HEAL (4325).

Press Contact: Carol Arnold, Arnold Communications, (877) 718-4604 x2,  
[carol@arnoldcomm.com](mailto:carol@arnoldcomm.com).