



134 East Amite Street
Jackson, MS 39201
www.fndmidsouth.org

Chris Crothers, Communications Director
601.863.0483
ccrothers@fndmidsouth.org

PRESS RELEASE
Embargo until August 4, 2008

Grant Awarded in St. Francis County to Benefit Youth

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI (AUGUST 4, 2008) During a press conference held earlier today, the Foundation for the Mid South (FMS) announced a \$345,452 grant through its Communities of Opportunity (COO) Initiative to the St. Francis County Boys and Girls Club in Forrest City. The grant will enable the St. Francis County Boys and Girls Club to expand programs and services offered to the youth of St. Francis County.

A focus of the funding will be to fully implement a national Boys and Girls Club program, SMART Moves, in St. Francis County. SMART Moves (Skills Mastery and Resistance Training) helps to promote youth abstinence from substance abuse and adolescent sexual involvement through the practice of responsible behavior. This prevention/education program uses a team approach—club staff, peer leaders, parents, and community representatives—to work with youth, ages 6 to 15, to strengthen or develop resistance and refusal skills, assertiveness, and decision-making skills.

Club Director Winfred Winston stated, "This grant will help our local club to move to the next level. We have worked so hard to get on the right track and the funding from the Foundation for the Mid South will definitely allow us to operate as a full-time facility. The Community," he continued, "will see an immediate difference in services. We expect the club to double its active membership because of these new financial resources. A key focus will be to put in place the human resources that will increase our ability to effectively improve the holistic life of St. Francis County's youth."

---more---

About the Boys and Girls Club of America

The Boys and Girls Club of America is a youth development organization that has a stellar reputation throughout the United States for its delivery of programs geared toward youth. The nonprofit's mission is to enable all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. The club provides youth a safe place to learn and grow, where caring, adult professionals teach life-enhancing programs and share character development experiences the yield and hope and opportunity.

About the Communities of Opportunity Initiative

FMS believes in the ability of residents to improve communities—all that is needed is some help. In specific geographic areas, the foundation has created Communities of Opportunity to provide a spark to help residents become advocates and agents for change. By strategically attracting, coordinating, and mobilizing resources (both human and financial) locally-based, resident-driven projects can be extremely effective as a mechanism to improve the health and vitality of communities.

COO is a model for community revitalization that seeks greater impact through collaboration between residents and stakeholders to achieve sustainable, comprehensive community transformation. The Initiative challenges the manner through which philanthropy traditionally uses its assets—not just money but also its influence—to attract and align investment (and reinvestment) in communities.

About the Foundation for the Mid South

The Foundation for the Mid South is a regional foundation that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. FMS invests in people and strategies that help to create the conditions where change can occur in the Mid South. The Foundation seeks to strengthen communities by attracting and mobilizing resources to improve the quality of life for all Mid Southerners.

---###---