

American Heart Association and Nature Rocks™ Partner to Empower Families to Get Outdoors and Get Active

Families challenged to make “60 Miles in 60 Days” Walking Pledge

WASHINGTON, DC – June 22, 2010 – Today Nature Rocks, a national program created to inspire and empower parents to take their families to play, explore and enjoy quality time in nature, announced a collaboration with the American Heart Association’s Start! initiative. Start! encourages increased physical activity among all Americans, emphasizing walking because it’s easy, free and has the lowest dropout rate of any form of activity.

In January, the American Heart Association identified physical activity as one of the seven measures necessary for ideal cardiovascular health. However, only 15 percent of American adults achieve the association’s recommended levels of moderate aerobic exercise (150 minutes per week or more). With the “60 Miles in 60 Days” Summer Walk Challenge, Nature Rocks and the American Heart Association are helping families close that gap. Participants in “60 Miles in 60 Days” can sign up at [www.startwalkingnow.org] and visit www.naturerocks.org to download a free guide – complete with tips, a walking checklist and mileage tracker – to help complete the challenge safely and successfully. The first 60 people to sign up will receive prizes from Nature Rocks and American Heart Association. Everyone who completes the challenge will be featured in Nature Rocks and Start! social media.

“Increasing physical activity and aerobic fitness are major goals of the American Heart Association in our efforts to improve the heart health of all Americans by 20 percent by the year 2020,” said Barry Franklin, Ph.D., director of Cardiac Rehabilitation and Exercise Laboratories at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich. and national Start! spokesperson. “Through this collaboration with Nature Rocks, we will reach more families with our proactive message: get out and get moving for your health.”

To kick off the collaboration, Nature Rocks will feature rotating Start! Walking Paths and American Heart Association content on www.naturerocks.org homepage and “Find Nature” page, which enables parents to find nature-related activities by zip code. Additionally, Start! participants will be exposed to the “families plus nature” component of Nature Rocks and be inspired to get outside and explore nature now with over a hundred activity ideas, guides and events listings.

“The benefits of nature to families involve health, but they also involve the heart; families that go outside together, stay together. By partnering with the American Heart Association, we’re bringing nature to the workplace and an important health component to family,” said Richard Louv, co-founder of the Children and Nature Network, Nature Rocks’ organizing partner. “The American Heart Association is among the most esteemed health organizations in our country and we’re proud to align our goals with theirs – encouraging heart health by motivating families to go outside and start walking.”

About the “60 Miles in 60 Days” Summer Walk Challenge

“60 Miles in 60 Days” Summer Walk Challenge will take place from June 22, 2010 through August 22, 2010. Those interested in participating can sign up at [<http://startwalkingnow.org/registration.jsp>], where they will be able to track each mile completed. The first 60 people to sign-up will receive a Nature Rocks reusable water bottle from The Nature Conservancy to help them stay hydrated on their journey, a safety blinker from American Heart Association, and other Nature Rocks stickers. To learn more, visit the “60 Miles in 60 Days” dedicated webpage at www.naturerocks.org/60Days.

About Nature Rocks

Nature Rocks helps to bring families and nature together by offering parents information, inspiration and tools to encourage and empower them to take their families into and enjoy nature. This is an ongoing initiative and the website and all related materials will be updated frequently to provide families with the most current tools and information to connect with nature. Current Nature Rocks partners are: The Nature Conservancy, REI, Children and Nature Network, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the American Camp Association and ecoAmerica. To learn more about Nature Rocks and its partners, please visit www.naturerocks.org, support us on Facebook at facebook.com/nature+rocks or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/naturerocks.

About Start!

Start! is the American Heart Association's national initiative that calls on Americans to create a culture of physical activity and health through walking. Start! is sponsored nationally by SUBWAY® Restaurants. Visit www.startwalkingnow.org to download a free personal walking plan, track your physical activity online or find a walking buddy in your area.

For additional information, please contact

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