

CALIFORNIA NUTRITIONIST WINS \$120,000 NATIONAL AWARD
FOR PROGRAM TO FIGHT OBESITY EPIDEMIC AMONG YOUTH

*Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program
Awards \$1.2 Million to Health Innovators*

BOSTON (May 27, 2003) – Arnell Hinkle, who is tackling the obesity epidemic among adolescents by supporting efforts in communities throughout California to encourage healthy lifestyles, has earned the nation’s highest honor for community health leadership.

Hinkle is among the outstanding individuals from across the country selected this year to receive a Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program (CHLP) award.

Hinkle, executive director of the California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program in Berkeley, Calif., founded CANFit in 1993 with funds from the settlement of a lawsuit, charging a breakfast cereal manufacturer with deceptive advertising. Her mission is to prevent obesity and chronic disease by helping people adopt healthy habits while young.

Drawing on her experience as a nutritionist, chef and organic farmer, Hinkle created a program that promotes healthy eating and activity to 10-to-14-year-olds from low-income, multi-ethnic families—groups that historically have poor diets and suffer disproportionately from health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

CANFit has provided grants to more than 60 youth organizations, scholarships to 90 low-income students studying in health fields, and fitness and nutrition training workshops to more than 500 people across California.

“What makes CANFit unique is that its work goes far beyond the dissemination of information,” said her nominator, James Sethian, Professor of Mathematics, University of California, Berkeley.

Projects CANFit has supported include a Cambodian recipe book, nutrition and fitness curriculum for Korean-language schools, a fast food survival guidebook, an American Indian surf camp, and a hip hop video promoting healthy eating and physical activity.

From the beginning, Hinkle has emphasized community ownership of CANFit projects and insisted that youth be involved in planning and evaluating each one.

While the original funding is long gone, in the words of her nominator, “Hinkle has grown CANFit into one of the most innovative and uncompromising nutrition education and community capacity-building programs in the country.”

Hinkle has provided consultation to numerous private, state and national agencies, including The 100 Black Men of America, Inc., South Dakota Lakota Sioux Diabetes Education Project, U.S. Bureau of Maternal and Child Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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“Community by community, these leaders are showing us the face of America’s new safety net,” said Catherine Dunham, director of the Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Leadership Program. “While larger, better endowed institutions must restrict or close services under the weight of severe budget cuts, these leaders’ programs remain strong because they are woven from and into the very fabric of the community.”

The program awards \$1.2 million each year to individuals who have overcome significant challenges to expand access to health care and social services to underserved members of their communities. Hinkle and this year’s other winners will be honored at a June 11 event in Washington, D.C. She will receive \$105,000 to enhance her program and \$15,000 as a personal award.

Hinkle was chosen from among 274 candidates for this year’s honor. Since it was established in 1992, 110 awards have been given to community leaders in 43 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

This year’s award winners represent urban and rural areas of California, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Texas and Virginia. They were nominated by community leaders, health professionals, government officials and others inspired by their work in providing essential health services to their communities.

The Community Health Leadership Program is a program of the Princeton, N.J. –based Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the largest private philanthropic organization dedicated to improving health and health care for Americans.

For more information, contact the program at (617) 426-9772 or visit www.communityhealthleaders.org.