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**Aspen Education Announces Unprecedented Results for
Children Attending Its Weight Loss Programs**

First-Ever Post-Camp Weight Loss Reported by Wellspring Camps

(CERRITOS, CA – May 17, 2005) — Aspen Education Group today announced that children attending its Wellspring Camps during summer 2004 lost an average of approximately four pounds per week during four- and eight-week sessions. In addition, Wellspring campers continued losing weight in the six months after camp – an unprecedented finding, according to research investigators. These weight loss outcomes have been called the best short-term and longer-term results ever reported for weight loss camps.

“This new study compares the pattern of weight gain prior to the program with the pattern of loss during and after the program and for the first time demonstrates continued post-camp losses and behavioral change,” said Daniel Kirschenbaum, Ph.D., a professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University Medical School and clinical director of Healthy Living Academies, the division of Aspen Education that operates Wellspring Camps.

During the summer of 2004, Wellspring campers lost an average of 19 pounds. In a post-camp weight loss evaluation of older campers – those who did not increase in height during the follow-up period – the group continued to lose weight, averaging 7.4 pounds of additional weight loss. According to this program evaluation, 91 percent of these campers either maintained or continued to lose weight during the follow-up period.

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To evaluate the progress of all campers since completing the Wellspring program, campers' body mass indexes (BMI; weight divided by height squared) were calculated and compared to norms for age, gender and ethnicity. Twelve months prior to camp, Wellspring campers averaged 56 percent overweight. By their admission date, their weight on average had increased to 67 percent overweight. While at camp this pattern of dramatic weight gain was clearly reversed; by August 2004 campers were 52 percent overweight. From September 2004 to March 2005, Wellspring campers' weight decreased to an average of 46 percent overweight. This decline is medically very significant, especially in the context of the pattern of weight gain in the year prior to attending Wellspring, according to Dr. Kirschenbaum.

"If campers had continued gaining weight at the rate they did before attending Wellspring, they would have been approximately 76 percent overweight in March 2005, creating a tremendous health risk," said Dr. Kirschenbaum. "A study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed that people who are 70 percent overweight have death rates that are about 57 percent higher than those within a normal weight range. This risk factor was about four times higher than that observed for people who were about 40 percent overweight."

Elliot Sainer, CEO of Aspen Education Group, said the weight loss results demonstrate that there is hope for many of today's overweight and obese children. "With approximately one-third of American children overweight or obese, parents cannot afford to give up hope that these children can learn new behavioral pathways that will lead to long and healthy lives. The Wellspring program shows that there are effective and safe approaches to weight loss and that successful behavioral change can produce clinically significant and lasting results," said Sainer.

Wellspring Camps operates Camp Wellspring, near Lake Placid, New York, for young women ages 14-22; Wellspring Adventure Camp near Asheville, North Carolina, for boys and girls ages 11-16; and Western Wellspring Adventure Camp in California for boys and girls 13-18. Healthy Living Academies also operates Academy of the Sierras, the nation's first year-round therapeutic boarding school for obese and overweight adolescents, located in Reedley, California.

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Unlike existing “diet camps,” the Wellspring program was designed by a group of leading researchers using the best current scientific understanding of the most effective approaches to safe weight loss and permanent behavioral and lifestyle changes – so the changes will last after campers return home. Wellspring provides intensive training on behaviors demonstrated by research to be required for successful long-term weight control (e.g., self-monitoring, journaling, goal-setting, contracting). According to other findings in the present evaluation by Wellspring, campers who self-monitored most consistently during camp tended to lose more weight during the follow-up period. Wellspring employs full-time master’s- and doctoral-level therapists at every camp to facilitate cognitive-behavioral therapy sessions that help campers stay focused and committed to permanent lifestyle change, and to help overcome underlying issues that may have contributed to the initial weight gain. The programs also focus on family involvement and have a unique Internet-based “after-care” program that requires campers to log-on to the Internet every day to continue self-monitoring, journaling and goal-setting. Camp therapists continue to provide feedback and support throughout this process. To learn more about Wellspring Camps and Academy of the Sierras, visit www.healthylivingacademies.com.

Aspen Education Group is recognized nationwide as the leading provider of education programs for underachieving young people. As the largest and most comprehensive network of therapeutic schools and programs, Aspen offers professionals and families the opportunity to choose a setting that best meets a student’s unique academic and emotional needs. An industry innovator, Aspen was voted among the top education companies by Eduventures, the leading independent education industry research firm. Aspen’s programs have been profiled by major news and television organizations, including: *U.S. News & World Report*, *USA Today*, ABC’s “Good Morning America” and the syndicated TV program “Dr. Phil.” For over two decades, Aspen Education Group has been achieving successful outcomes for families. No other organization in the therapeutic education industry offers a more enlightened approach or a more reputable network of quality programs. For information about Aspen’s other therapeutic schools and programs, visit www.aspeneducation.com or call (888) 972-7736.

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