



**Contact:**  
Chris Roy  
Camp Wellspring  
(914) 232-1915

## **Aspen Education Group Launches Nation's First Therapeutic Boarding Schools for Overweight and Obese Youths**

### **New "Healthy Living Academies" Division to Address Epidemic Increase in Childhood and Teen Obesity**

(Cerritos, CA – March 8, 2004) Aspen Education Group today announced the launch of a new division to address the epidemic of obesity that is afflicting America's children, teens and young adults. In keeping with Aspen's decades-long focus on therapeutic education, Healthy Living Academies will establish and operate the nation's first therapeutic boarding schools for overweight and obese youths, and beginning this summer will also operate shorter therapeutic camps and outdoor programs.

Healthy Living Academies' boarding schools are a novel comprehensive and extended clinical program for treating overweight and obese children and teens. One or more semesters at a Healthy Living Academy will maximize the long-term behavioral changes required to produce substantial and permanent weight loss. The shorter camps and outdoor programs will introduce youths to life strategies designed to achieve long-term behavioral change, and will incorporate extensive after-care support.

"Over the past 20 years, obesity among children and adolescents has skyrocketed from 6% to over 15%, making it the most serious health issue facing our children" said Ryan Craig, a former member of the Aspen Board of Directors and newly appointed president of Healthy Living Academies. "By employing a multi-disciplinary clinical model in a boarding school environment, we can offer a life-changing solution to thousands of overweight and obese teenagers who are facing near- or long-term health issues that can significantly compromise quality of life."

*more*

“Based on our two decades of success in changing youth behaviors at Aspen’s specialized boarding schools, we believe the new settings we are creating offer a breakthrough model for addressing the obesity epidemic,” said Elliot Sainer, chief executive officer of Aspen Education Group. “Boarding schools provide the kind of supportive environment and extended, intensive behavioral therapy that many children need to be successful in overcoming obesity. Our Healthy Living Academies will give children this advantage, plus an educational program that allows students to accelerate academically as they change their lives.”

Healthy Living Academies’ first two programs are summer camps, opening in June 2004. Camp Wellspring ([www.campwellspring.com](http://www.campwellspring.com)), located in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, will accept women ages 16 – 23. Wellspring Adventure Camp ([www.wellspringadventurecamp.com](http://www.wellspringadventurecamp.com)), located in the mountains of North Carolina, will admit boys and girls ages 10-15 years old. Both camps feature fun summer activities, while providing training and techniques to achieve long-range behavioral change and weight loss. Family workshops and after-care programs are designed to help campers maintain their weight goals for life. Wellspring campers can reserve placement for the first Healthy Living Academy, expected to open during the 2004-05 school year.

Heading up Healthy Living Academies’ clinical program is Daniel S. Kirschenbaum, Ph.D. Dr. Kirschenbaum, a professor at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago, has developed a number of successful weight loss programs for hospitals across the country. He is a past president of the Division of Exercise and Sport Psychology of the American Psychological Association and has authored over 100 scientific articles and eight books, including *Treatment of Childhood and Adolescent Obesity* and *The 9 Truths About Weight Loss*. The latter was unanimously endorsed by the Board of Directors of the American Council on Exercise as “the best book ever written for the public on how to lose weight and keep it off.”

“Healthy Living Academies will provide a controlled environment in which a child can learn and implement new habits and decision-making skills,” said Dr. Kirschenbaum.

*more*

“These academies also will help establish an effective clinical model that can be applied to non-residential settings, like public schools, to benefit all children.”

Healthy Living Academies has also assembled an Advisory Board consisting of leading experts in pediatric obesity. These Board members include: Kelly D. Brownell, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Psychology at Yale University and Director of the Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders; Georgia Kostas, M.P.H., R.D., Director of Nutrition at the Cooper Clinic, Dallas, and author of *The Cooper Clinic Solution to the Diet Revolution*; Melinda Sothern, Ph.D. of Louisiana State University Health Sciences and Pennington Centers, and author of *Trim Kids, The Proven 12-Week Plan That Has Helped Thousands of Children Achieve a Healthier Weight*; and Dennis Styne, MD, Rumsey Chair of Pediatric Endocrinology at the University of California Davis, a pediatric endocrinologist who specializes in pediatric obesity and its complications.

Aspen Education Group is the nation’s leader in providing educational opportunities that improve the quality of life for troubled children, teens and young adults and their families. AEG offers a wide diversity of programs, settings and solutions that match youths’ needs with the right learning environment. Through Aspen’s 41 programs in 13 states, parents can choose from long-term residential treatment to community-based outpatient services, with a variety of therapeutic interventions that include boarding schools, special education day schools, outdoor therapy and wilderness programs. AEG was named among the top 100 education companies in 2003 by Eduventures, a leading independent research firm dedicated to learning markets.

To learn more about AEG’s other therapeutic schools and programs or about Healthy Living Academies, visit [www.aspeneducation.com](http://www.aspeneducation.com) or [www.healthylivingacademies.com](http://www.healthylivingacademies.com), or call (888) 972-7736.

# # #