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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MIDLANDS MENTORING PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCES FIRST ANNUAL MENTOR FAIR

Eleven Omaha nonprofits join efforts to increase number of Omaha mentors

To kick-off the summer, a group of Omaha non-profit organizations are working together to serve the need for more mentors in the greater Omaha community. The Midlands Mentoring Partnership will be joined by 11 Omaha non-profits to host a "Mentor Fair" at Westroads Mall on Saturday, June 5, 2010, from noon to 4:00 p.m. Parents, teachers, students and potential mentors are invited to visit displays to learn more about the many ways that mentoring can make a significant difference in our community. The non-profit organizations that will be providing information are: All Our Kids; Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands; Boys and Girls Club of Omaha; Child Saving Institute; Girls Inc. Pathfinders; Ollie Webb Center, Inc.; Omaha Home for Boys; Omaha Street School, Release Ministries; TeamMates Mentoring Program and Youth Emergency Services.

Midlands Mentoring Partnership (MMP) is an 11-member collaboration designed to:

- o Raise public awareness of and support for high-quality youth mentoring programs.
- o Improve youth mentoring through education, best practices and resource-sharing.
- o Increase the capacity of mentoring programs in recruiting/retaining more mentors.
- o Carry out recommendations made by the Building Bright Futures Mentoring Task Force, led by Mike Fahey.

According to Deborah Neary, executive director of MMP, there are "thousands of youth in Omaha waiting for a mentor. They crave a trusted, personal adult friendship and guidance beyond their immediate family and school teachers." Neary adds, "It is so easy to become a mentor. Anyone who can share four hours a month can make a significant difference in the life of a young person, and most often, the mentor receives rewards in just as many ways as the mentee."

All of the organizations in the Midlands Mentoring Partnership follow the national standards for mentoring programs and are dedicated to promoting awareness regarding the needs for mentors. Research shows that by giving just four hours a month over a period of at least one year, a mentor can significantly improve a student's engagement and performance, strengthen adult and peer relationships, promote social skills development, raise self confidence and resiliency, while also reducing high risk behaviors. Studies also prove that that young people with mentors in their lives are less likely to skip school, use illegal drugs and alcohol, and are more likely to get along better with their families.

"These are amazing kids," states Neary, "and it is so exciting to watch them mature knowing that you made a difference in someone's life." For more information about this event contact: Deborah Neary, Midlands Mentoring Partnership, at 402.932.2025, ext. 1005, or visit www.buildingbrightfutures.net.

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