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SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RECEIVES GRANT FROM MARCH OF DIMES – ARIZONA CHAPTER

Funding supports Healthy Families program, provides resources for parents and caregivers

PHOENIX (July 14, 2011) – The March of Dimes – Arizona Chapter recently awarded a grant totaling \$23,340 for Southwest Human Development's Healthy Families program. Healthy Families is a voluntary program for expectant and new parents in Arizona to receive child development and parenting information as well as assistance in reaching self-sufficiency through proven child-abuse prevention strategies. The program aligns parents with community resources and offers support to ease the transition from pregnancy through the first five years of parenthood.

This grant will help fund a pediatric nurse/health consultant who will provide medical expertise for the program and who will consult with Healthy Families staff on the most current risk reduction and preconception health information for families in the program. This resource allows Healthy Families' staff to address issues such as smoking cessation, substance abuse and related prenatal issues. Continued investment in this home visitation program will help improve birth outcomes for babies and will help parents learn how to build positive parent-child relationships, how to enhance problem solving skills, and ensure their child receives the best possible medical care during those critical early years.

"The Healthy Families program assists more than 1,700 families in Arizona each year," said Ginger Ward, founder and CEO of Southwest Human Development. "With the support of the March of Dimes – Arizona Chapter, we are able to expand this program and support more Valley families with specific, medical expertise as it relates to children's critical early years."

This grant is one of the ways March of Dimes helps fulfill its mission of improving the health of babies by preventing birth defects, prematurity and infant mortality. Through the Healthy Families program, parents are also supported with access to parenting curriculums, videos, parent/child activities, monthly newsletters, and invitations to monthly parent support groups and quarterly events to ensure an optimal start in life for their children

"We are happy to award grant funding to Southwest Human Development so that more resources and services can be offered to those in need," said Beth Mulcahy, Director of Programs Services for March of Dimes – Arizona Chapter. "Support for March of Dimes events, such as March for Babies, make it possible for us to give back to programs in the Valley that further our mission of giving every baby a healthier start in life."

About March of Dimes

The March of Dimes is the leading non-profit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org.

About Southwest Human Development

Founded in 1981 as a non-profit organization, Southwest Human Development provides comprehensive services for young children and their families in several areas: disabilities, early literacy, child health and welfare, Head Start and professional training. Now serving 135,000 children and families each year, Southwest Human Development is the state's largest community-based organization of its type. In 2007, Southwest Human Development became the official Easter

Seals affiliate of central and northern Arizona. Easter Seals Southwest Human Development provides services to children with disabilities and other special needs, and support to their families. In addition, CEO Ginger Ward was recently elected to the national board of directors for ZERO TO THREE and named one of the Valley's top 25 CEOs for 2010 by the *Phoenix Business Journal*. For more information on Southwest Human Development's many services or donation and volunteer opportunities, visit www.swhd.org.