



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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National Foundation for Governors' Fitness Councils Brings Multi-Million Dollar Youth Fitness Campaign to Arkansas

*Fitness Icon Jake Steinfeld and Governor Asa Hutchinson Open
National Champion Schools Nominations for Elementary and Middle Schools in Arkansas*

LITTLE ROCK — Fitness icon Jake Steinfeld, chairman of the National Foundation for Governors' Fitness Councils, has declared war on childhood obesity. To help combat this disease, he's bringing the foundation's multi-million dollar physical fitness campaign to Arkansas and has engaged Governor Asa Hutchinson to partner in this effort.

The campaign encourages elementary and middle school educators to think outside the box by implementing innovative ideas in fitness and nutrition for their students. Three schools, selected by the national foundation, will be deemed National Champion Schools and will each be awarded a \$100,000 state-of-the-art Live Positively(TM) Fitness Center for its efforts. The nomination process opens today at www.natgovfit.org and will run through mid-June.

"I'm honored to partner with Jake Steinfeld to bring the National Champion Schools campaign to Arkansas schools," said Governor Asa Hutchinson. "Jake and the foundation have done incredible work around the country in the fight against childhood obesity, and I'm excited that he has chosen Arkansas to take part in this campaign. Childhood obesity is a significant problem in this great state. I believe this program is a step in the right direction for getting our kids fit and healthy, and I would encourage every elementary and middle school in the state to take part in the nomination process. Three schools in the state will become the recipient of a brand new fitness center, but every school participating in the process will be setting its students on the path to a healthier tomorrow."

The National Foundation for Governors' Fitness Councils program will make its way into all 50 states in the coming years. What sets it apart from other initiatives is that it does not rely on taxpayer dollars or state funding, making it even more attractive to cash-strapped states. Each fitness center is financed through public/private partnerships with companies like The Coca-Cola Company and Nike. In addition,

TuffStuff Fitness International equips all of the fitness centers. The national foundation's goal is to build a nation of the fittest, healthiest kids in the world.

“For many, change can be difficult. It’s often easier to stay with the status quo. Yet, change can also be the start of something new and exciting. The National Champion Schools campaign is that change,” said Jake Steinfeld. “When you have the right tools and the inspiration, anything is possible. Today, we are changing the way our kids think about fitness and physical activity. We’re changing their habits and in the process changing their lives! And now, Arkansas schools have a great opportunity to make a change that will have a lasting impact on kids well into their future. Academics and fitness go hand in hand. We’re not only building bodies, but most importantly we are building confidence and self esteem in these terrific kids. By placing fitness centers in elementary and middle schools, we are certain to see positive, healthy changes. Our children are our most precious resource, and by providing them with a strong foundation in health and fitness, we can feel confident that they’ll excel beyond their wildest dreams.”

Physical activity and exercise are shown to help prevent and treat more than 40 chronic diseases, enhance individual health and quality of life, and reduce health care costs. In schools, studies show that physical activity improves academic achievement, increases confidence and self-esteem, reduces discipline problems, cuts absenteeism and fosters better interpersonal relationships.

For more information about the national foundation or to download a nomination form, visit www.natgovfit.org.

About the National Foundation for Governors’ Fitness Councils

The national foundation seeks to encourage and reward innovation in the field of youth fitness by awarding fitness centers to schools that use new and unique methods to promote student physical activity and wellness. The national foundation envisions a fitness center in every school in the United States, helping to build a nation that — through innovation and a "Don't Quit" attitude — boasts the fittest kids in the world.

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