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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 6, 2007

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Community Planting Roots with Transitional Housing Kids

The Homework Club kids of Healy Heights get a chance to plant roots and seeds in their community garden this Saturday, June 9th, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The Homework Club, a NeighborImpact transitional housing program, is a place where kids, whose families would otherwise be homeless, can go to have an after school snack, be with their friends, and learn new things when their parents are not around. Now that the kids are out of school, the garden becomes a new site for learning with the larger Healy Heights' community, Homework Club tutors and NeighborImpact volunteers.

This year, the volunteer energy and enthusiasm is stemming from multiple Central Oregon merchants and agencies including Deschutes Brewery, tbd advertising, and a local charter of Roots and Shoots (a national organization begun by Jane Goodall).

“Community involvement is extremely important to the Deschutes Brewery family and is in fact part of its core values. We are very excited to be able to help keep the Children's Garden growing, which is an important learning tool for the children and families of Healey Heights,” said Christina LaRue, Deschutes Brewery Volunteer Coordinator.

The Deschutes Brewery volunteers are rounding up compost for the garden, hops to grow along the fence, and also snacks for the kids. An additional donations and dedication of time comes from Benjamin Kinzer of tbd advertising. Kinzer bought cameras for the kids to take photos of their favorite plants in the garden because,

“I know when I was a kid this would have been something I'd really have enjoyed. Plus, these are things these kids will never forget. It also shows them that there are so many great and healthy things they can get excited about and be a part of from beginning to end.”

For some of the same reasons, Kirsteen Wolf of Roots and Shoots is donating cut flowers – to bring a sense of beauty, quality and an appreciation of the ‘gifts’ of nature, that may be shared with local senior citizens (that is if Wolf gets her way and gets a chance to recruit a Healy Heights individual to spawn this as a new Roots and Shoots chapter that would be housed at Healy).

Donations for the garden came from high up as well: a complete irrigation system (estimated \$300 value) from Fortune 1000 Corporation Toro Inc. was one of the surprises. When volunteer Kim Small heard the irrigation was broke in the garden, she hit up the corporation for the first class drip irrigation system.

Homework Club Coordinator, Jill Christensen is excited to have all of the community support arrive in time for a community garden again this year since the support it received last year – from the OSU Master Gardeners - did not return for the second year around. She adds that in the past,

“I’ve seen how this healthy garden can grow healthy kids - especially since it’s really the kids that are putting in the valiant labors and work here. Their efforts then go for all of the families, which are important also because many of our client families lack access to the fresh vegetables and herbs that others may take for granted.”

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