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ST. LUKE'S RECOGNIZED FOR CREATING A CULTURE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Boise, ID (October 30, 2007) – St. Luke's is one of 550 companies in the United States acknowledged by the American Heart Association's Start! movement for meeting criteria for employee fitness. St. Luke's Boise, Meridian, and Wood River Medical Centers will be recognized as a 2007 Platinum Achievement Start! Fit-Friendly Company at the American Heart Association's annual CEO Breakfast on Friday, November 2 at the Arid Club.

Start! is an answer to the nation's growing physical inactivity problem. The movement promotes physical activity through workplace walking programs to help employees reduce their risks for heart disease and stroke and encourage them to live longer, healthier lives. American employers continue to face ever-increasing healthcare costs and simultaneous losses in productivity of \$225.8 billion a year. Benefits to companies can include increased productivity, improved morale, and lower healthcare costs.

One aspect of this movement is the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program. This program recognizes employers that champion the health of their employees and work to create a culture of physical activity and health. Companies are recognized for progressive leadership as they demonstrate concern for their staff, which encourages other companies to do the same.

St. Luke's Boise, Meridian, and Wood River Medical Centers have been recognized as a Platinum Level **Start!** Fit-Friendly Company by the American Heart Association **Start!** Movement for fulfilling the following parameters:

- Offers employees physical activity support
- Increases healthy eating options at the worksite
- Promotes a wellness culture
- Implements at least nine criteria as outlined by the AHA in the areas of physical activity, nutrition and culture
- Demonstrates measurable outcomes related to workplace wellness

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“The Start! Fit-Friendly Company program is a great way to recognize the efforts of employers who are making health and wellness a priority for their employees. We are proud of the accomplishments of St. Luke’s and encourage other employers in the Treasure Valley and Wood River Valley areas to strive to make physical activity and wellness a top priority for their employees as well, ” said Paul Powell, Chief Financial Officer, Intermountain Gas Company and Chairman for the 2008 Start! Heart Walk.

Start! Fit-Friendly Companies have taken steps to become heart-healthy places to work. Their CEOs signed a pledge to participate and partnered with the American Heart Association to receive resources and consultation to help their companies become healthier places to work. Once they reached their goals, the companies submitted an application for recognition. An American Heart Association expert panel determined if they qualified for recognition and the appropriate level.

“St. Luke’s is dedicated to creating a healthy and physically active environment for our employees,” said Gary Fletcher, CEO of St. Luke’s Boise and Meridian Medical Centers. “We pride ourselves on being recognized as a Start! Fit-Friendly Company, and encourage our employees on their path to a healthier lifestyle.”

Editor’s Note: Representatives from St. Luke’s and the American Heart Association will be available for interviews at the American Heart Association’s CEO Breakfast at the Arid Club on Friday, November 2. The plaque presentation will take place at 9:00 am.

About St. Luke’s

Founded in 1902, St. Luke’s Boise Regional Medical Center is a 369-bed community hospital. St. Luke’s Meridian Medical Center is a 106-bed community hospital that began providing a full range of hospital services in 2001. St. Luke’s Boise and St. Luke’s Meridian are both designated as a Magnet hospital, the gold standard for nursing excellence.

About the American Heart Association

Founded in 1924, the American Heart Association today is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of heart disease and stroke. These diseases, America’s No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and all other cardiovascular diseases claim over 870,000 lives a year. In fiscal year 2005–06 the association invested over \$543 million in research, professional and public education, advocacy and community service programs to help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org.

To find out more about the American Heart Associations Start! Movement and the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program, visit www.heart.org/start or call 1-800-AHA-USA-1.

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