



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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ST. LUKE'S RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY EMPLOYEES

Boise, ID (May 15, 2007) – St. Luke's recognizes that encouraging employees to be healthy has benefits for both the employer and the employee. For that reason, St. Luke's will be celebrating National Employee Health and Fitness day with a one-mile walk starting at noon on Wednesday, May 16 in Boise, Meridian, and Wood River.

The one-mile walk, called the Appleseed Shuffle, will be the final mile of the American Heart Association's *Start!* program that St. Luke's began on April 18. The *Start!* program, which encourages employees to take walking breaks throughout the workday, is one of the many components of the St. Luke's Wellness Challenge that employees can elect to participate in.

There were 190 St. Luke's employees from various campuses that signed up for the *Start!* program, creating 38 teams of five people each. The goal of the four-week program was to walk the distance from Boise to the Big Apple – 2,472 miles. Collectively, St. Luke's employees will have walked to New York City and back nearly twice.

“More than 60 percent of adults do not achieve the recommended 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity and 25 percent are not active at all,” said Mary Poell, Employee Health and Wellness Specialist. “St. Luke's encourages employees to exercise and develop healthy lifestyles because of the physical and psychological benefits, such as improved heart health.”

St. Luke's offers an employee wellness program to improve employees' health and the bottom line. Investing in workforce health leads to enhanced employee productivity, reduced absenteeism, decreased rates of illness and injuries, and health care cost containment.

According to the Center for Disease Control, the following has been discovered:

- Job stress is estimated to cost American industry \$200-300 billion annually
- It costs on average, \$1,300 for an employee who smokes per year
- Work injuries cost \$121 billion in medical care, lost productivity and wages
- National Safety Council estimates that one million employees are absent on an average workday because of stress related problems

NOTE: The walk will take place at St. Luke's Boise, Meridian, and Wood River campuses. For more information call Catie Wardwell.

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