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Press Release

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First 5 Riverside Supports NineZero Games FASD Prevention Conference

Riverside, CA – First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission, will help support a free Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) prevention conference being held on October 11 at the Holiday Inn Express in Beaumont. The conference is a part of the NineZero Games, an awareness and fundraising event hosted by The Arc of Riverside County.

The Arc of Riverside County, a nonprofit organization that provides services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is organizing the NineZero Games to raise awareness of FASD and to support their NineZero Project. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders include a wide range of disabilities caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

First 5 Riverside, a public agency that supports services for children through age five that enable them to be successful in school and throughout their lives, has donated \$3,000 to help The Arc of Riverside County cover many of the costs associated with conducting this free conference.

“Getting a healthy start in life is critical to children's future development. Parents need to be aware that they play a crucial role in the positive development of their children before birth as well as after,” said Harry Freedman, executive director of First 5 Riverside. “Therefore, we are pleased to partner with The Arc of Riverside County in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders prevention efforts.”

The NineZero Games prevention conference will feature top speakers in the field of FASD education and prevention, including Jan Campbell, Teresa Kellerman, and Diane Malbin. The

conference will have two identical sessions, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Those interested in attending are encouraged to pre-register online at NineZeroGames.com or by calling (951) 688-5141.

The NineZero Games include – a golf tournament on one of the Southern California’s finest courses (Oak Valley Golf Club), an official World TeamTennis tournament for players of all levels and a tennis camp for those who want to learn to play, a scenic NineZero Walk-A-Thon for everyone, a healthy lifestyles family faire, an Off The Bounce Soccer tournament, and more. After the event, people will come together for a dinner and program to celebrate the participants, acknowledge sponsors and affirm The Arc of Riverside County’s commitment to people with developmental disabilities.

Money raised from the NineZero Games will be used to fund FASD prevention activities and programs of The Arc of Riverside County. Proceeds will also benefit individuals with many different developmental disabilities that The Arc of Riverside County serves throughout the county – including the Pass Area, Moreno Valley and services in and around Riverside city.

The NineZero Games derives its name from The Arc of Riverside County’s NineZero Project that is spreading the word about the devastating effects of drinking alcohol during pregnancy. The NineZero Project (Nine months, Zero alcohol) began in Moreno Valley in 2001 and is now reaching numerous counties in California and many other states. NineZero is becoming the word most associated with FASD prevention everywhere. The Arc of Riverside County hopes that through their prevention efforts, they can also raise awareness of the need for services and supports for people with FASD.

“We’re thrilled by the support we’re getting for the NineZero Project,” said The Arc of Riverside County Executive Director Jim Stream. “More and more young people and the general public are beginning to understand the seriousness of this issue. More importantly, many are making a commitment to abstain from alcohol during these critical nine months.”

The NineZero Games will help The Arc of Riverside County’s education and awareness campaign convey the NineZero message (Nine Months, Zero Alcohol!) to the next generation of parents, women in substance abuse recovery, and women seeking prenatal care. Sponsors of the event will be seen as leaders in the community for their endorsement of a cutting edge cause.

The NineZero Project features a peer-to-peer training curriculum called FASTRAC (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Teaching and Research Awareness Campaign) and is offered free to all Riverside County high schools thanks to the philanthropic efforts of the Riverside Arlington Kiwanis Club. The NineZero Project also uses public service announcements featuring Olympic athletes and everyday people concerned about FASD, an interactive Web site (www.NineZero.org), and NineZero promotional items geared toward teens and young adults like T-shirts and tank tops as well as temporary tattoos.

One baby in 100 in the United States is born with a significant level of prenatal alcohol exposure. This happens only when mothers drink alcohol during pregnancy and is therefore totally preventable. Many children can be spared a lifelong sentence of living with a disability or an irreversible physical or mental condition through education and prevention. County health and social service personnel are seeing many of the problems drinking during pregnancy causes and

are involved with The Arc of Riverside County in this county-wide effort as well as their own prevention efforts. Individuals born with prenatal exposure to alcohol represent some of their toughest cases. It follows the burden on taxpayers because this public health problem is enormous.

The Arc of Riverside County is a 54-year-old nonprofit organization located in Western Riverside County. The main office is at 8138 Mar Vista Court in Riverside, 92504.

For more information on sponsoring, volunteering, or participating in the NineZero Games, call Jeanne Ramirez at (951) 756-4946, or e-mail her at jramirezninezero@aol.com. Those interested can also visit NineZeroGames.com.

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