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SMH's Parenting Center offers Trim Kids program to fight childhood obesity

SLIDELL, La. — (May 5, 2010)—Slidell Memorial Hospital (SMH) and the Fit as a Firefighter Program will offer Trim Kids, a program aimed at fostering self-esteem and teaching nutrition and exercise skills to local overweight children, beginning June 2. The 10-session program provides a fun way for children to learn lifelong strategies that encourage healthy living.

"Trim Kids has allowed me to lose the weight that I have struggled with my whole life," said one participant from a recent Trim Kids session. "It has made me more confident and helped me prove that once I put my mind to a goal, I will achieve it! It has improved my quality of life."

Trim Kids is a 10-session program that will meet from 4:30-6:30 p.m. on Fridays during the summer, beginning the June 2. Each two-hour session includes simple fitness activities and games, snacking and eating tips, recipes, behavior modification and family interaction, along with fun field trips. The program also includes discussions about healthy attitudes, goals, peer pressure and stress and is presented by licensed dietitians and fitness instructors. Parents will learn healthy eating and fitness strategies the entire family can embrace. Classes are limited to the first 25 participants who sign up. The program fee is \$25 for the entire 10 sessions plus a \$10 handbook fee.

"Over the past year, many participants involved in the program have lost weight but more significantly they have dropped up to 8-9 Body Mass Index points. We find most of the children are growing taller without gaining additional weight. The families involved have found the program easy to follow and have greatly appreciated the healthy lifestyle knowledge that has changed the direction for their families," said Program Director Taffy Morrison.

Developed by LSU Health Science Center, the Trim Kids program was designed specifically for children struggling with their weight. Participants must be between the ages of seven and 13 and have a weight or Body Mass Index (BMI) at or above the 85th percentile.

To register or for more information on Trim Kids or Fit as a Firefighter, please contact Taffy Morrison, Parenting Center Educator and Fit as a Firefighter Director, at (985)649-8529.

About Fit as a Firefighter

The award-winning Fit as a Firefighter program, sponsored by SMH and the St. Tammany Fire Protection District 1, serves overweight/obese children aged 7-12 years classified by their pediatrician or family member to be overweight with potential health concerns such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes; etc. The program teaches skills, motivation and nutritional education for leading a healthy lifestyle in a fun-filled, supportive environment. The camp strives to teach life skills that include making healthy food choices, making good decisions to stay safe, and incorporating an active lifestyle for families and children in Louisiana.

About SMH

Slidell Memorial Hospital is a full-service 182-bed acute care not-for-profit community hospital located at 1001 Gause Blvd., in the heart of Slidell. Founded in 1959, SMH is the third-largest employer in St. Tammany Parish, employing 1,100 full, part-time and pool clinical and administrative employees. SMH serves as a primary healthcare resource for families in St. Tammany Parish, La.; Pearl River County, Miss.; and the greater Mississippi Gulf Coast region. It is located online at <http://www.slidellmemorial.org>.

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