Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation and Discovery Education Award More Than $100,000 in Prizes to Deserving Schools Nationwide as Part of Healthy Living Initiative

-- Elementary Schools in Kentucky and North Carolina Win $30,000 in Grants, New Playground Equipment to Enhance School and Community Wellness--

--Connecticut School Rewarded with $20,000 for Creating Innovative Program Designed to Combat Childhood Obesity--

Silver Spring, Md. – The Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation (HWCF), a CEO-led coalition of more than 275 organizations dedicated to helping families and schools fight childhood obesity, and Discovery Education, the leading provider of digital content and professional development for K-12 classrooms, announced today the winners of the 2015 Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes and Smart from the Start Awards, annually offered incentive programs from Together Counts™. Designed to encourage students to live active and healthy lives, these programs aim to increase the impact of health and wellness programs both in and out of school, and will ultimately award more than $100,000 in prizes to deserving schools across the nation.

The following schools have been chosen as this year’s grand prize winners:

Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes:
Chosen from nearly 400,000 entries nationwide, ArtSpace Charter School in Swannanoa, N.C., and Southside Elementary School of Public Schools of Robeson County in Nortonville, Ky., have been selected as the grand prize winners of this year’s Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes. Acknowledging the importance of supporting low-income schools, each year the sweepstakes selects a Title I school as one of the two grand prize winners. This year, the sweepstakes proudly recognizes both ArtSpace Charter School and Southside Elementary School as Title I grand prize winners. As grand prize winners, each school will receive $30,000 in grant funding, sporting goods equipment and a new playground (valued at $15,500) from Playworld, a leading playground equipment and surfacing manufacturer committed to saving outdoor unstructured play. The sweepstakes commends these schools for their commitment to educating students on
the importance of living active, healthy lives.

“ArtSpace is a charter school and, in North Carolina, that means we don’t receive funding for our facilities. Renovating and improving our recreational facilities has been high on the list every year, but it keeps getting bumped down as other issues take priority,” said Josh Batenhorst, Enterprise and Development Manager, Artspace Charter School. “This Playground Makeover will ensure that our students have access to a great play facility where they can exercise as they learn and play! We know our students are going to be thrilled to have the new equipment and we are so happy to have been chosen as a winner!”

“We are ecstatic that Southside Elementary is the winner of the Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes!” said Principal Millie Seiber of Public Schools of Robeson County’s Southside Elementary School. “Winning means that our faculty and staff can expand our commitment to students of providing an environment that promotes lifelong health and physical activity.”

Smart from the Start Awards:
The Smart from the Start Awards encourages early childhood educators to design and implement wellness initiatives in their preschool classrooms. This year, Together Counts has named New Beginnings Family Academy, a public charter school in Bridgeport, Conn., as the 2015 grand prize winner. The school will receive a $20,000 grant.

New Beginnings Family Academy’s development director, Ms. Quentin Ball, developed an innovative three-year program designed to increase students’ understanding of nutrition and exercise concepts. Entitled Ready, Set, Learn!, the program engages students in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily, encourages students to eat an additional serving of fresh fruits and vegetables, and emphasizes Energy Balance – a core concept in the Together Counts curriculum that teaches the importance of balancing calories consumed with calories burned. As part of the program, teachers work with students to help them understand their Energy Balance progress. A three-year plan combining Together Counts’ resources and Ball’s newly designed program has made a much-needed impact on students at New Beginnings Family Academy.

“At New Beginnings Family Academy we think that consistent nutrition and physical exercise are paramount in education for both stimulating the mind and body,” said Quentin Ball, development director at New Beginnings Family Academy. “With our Ready, Set, Learn! program, we have the amazing opportunity to provide additional eating and exercising resources to our youngest students – the PreK students – thus instilling in our littlest ones the best habits from day one.”

Established in 2010, Together Counts offers students, educators and families state-of-the-art curriculum and activities – at no cost – that help to build healthy environments and reduce childhood obesity. Results of a Spring 2014 impact study show that students who engaged with the program’s Energy Balance 101 curriculum added one or more physical activities per week to their routine while also making healthier nutrition choices. Additionally, more than 90 percent of educators who implemented the curriculum in their classroom reported that their students had a better understanding of key concepts after using the program tools.
“We are encouraged to see so many creative school leaders demonstrate a real commitment to the health and wellness of their students through their participation in these incentive programs,” said Lisa Gable, President of HWCF. “By implementing the Together Counts curriculum, these preschools are helping children learn the value of active, healthy lifestyles. We are particularly pleased to provide funding to schools with great need and we look forward to seeing the impact of each award.”

“Discovery Education is committed to providing free resources that not only educate students about the importance of healthy living, but also empower and inspire them to improve the health of their community,” said Lori McFarling, Chief Marketing Officer and Senior Vice President, Discovery Education. “We are proud to continue our partnership with the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation to provide educators, families and students nationwide with tools they need to fight childhood obesity and achieve healthy lifestyles.”

For additional information on the Together Counts initiative and to see a complete list of winners and prizes visit, http://www.togethercounts.com/at-school/win-for-your-school.

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**About Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation**
Celebrating its Five Year Anniversary, the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation (HWCF), formed in 2009, is a CEO-led organization whose national, multiyear effort is designed to help reduce obesity—especially childhood obesity. In just five years, HWCF members have already removed 6.4 trillion calories from the marketplace, which represents a 78 calorie reduction per person, per day. It is a first-of-its–kind coalition that brings together more than 275 retailers, food and beverage manufacturers, restaurants, sporting goods and insurance companies, trade associations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and professional sports organizations. HWCF promotes ways to help people achieve a healthy weight through energy balance—calories in and calories out. It focuses its efforts on two critical areas—families and schools—through its Together Counts™ campaign which is used by over 23.5 million students across the country.

**About Discovery Education**
Discovery Education is the global leader in standards-based digital content and professional development for K-12, transforming teaching and learning with award-winning digital textbooks, multimedia content that supports the implementation of Common Core, professional development, assessment tools, and the largest professional learning community of its kind. Available in over half of all U.S. schools and primary schools in England, community colleges and in 50 countries around the world, Discovery Education partners with districts, states and like-minded organizations to captivate students, empower teachers, and transform classrooms with customized solutions that accelerate academic achievement. Discovery Education is powered by Discovery Communications (NASDAQ: DISCA, DISCB, DISCK), the number one nonfiction media company in the world. Explore the future of education at www.discoveryeducation.com.

**About Playworld**
Playworld believes The World Needs Play®. Play is vital to everyone’s health and well-being. It’s something you are never too young or too old to enjoy. We develop playground environments where creativity is king, belly laughs are welcome and children make the rules. Playworld’s equipment and surfacing are designed to unleash the transformational power of play so bodies grow stronger, children play safely and imagination can take flight. For more than 40 years, Playworld has created innovative, inclusive and meaningful outdoor play experiences for all ages and abilities. Come play with us at www.PlayworldSystems.com.

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