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City of Lima Wins \$100,000 Prize to Fight Childhood Obesity

This marks the 2nd time in the three-year history of the program that the City of Lima has won the award, presented annually by The United States Conference of Mayors and the American Beverage Association.

Lima, OH, MAY 20 – Representatives of The United States Conference of Mayors and the American Beverage Association were on hand in Lima today to present Mayor David Berger with a \$100,000 cash grant to support an ambitious childhood obesity initiative, Cooking for Change. The Cooking for Change program will bring together high school students from the food management program at Lima Senior High School and the culinary arts program at Apollo Career Center to design and develop an healthy eating initiative aimed at reducing obesity rates in the city of Lima and throughout Allen County. The program will have seven stages, including a nationwide competition in which teams of high school culinary arts students take on the challenge of creating a delicious, nutritious school meal for \$1 or less per meal.

“Cooking for Change exemplifies the type of initiative we hoped to identify when we launched this multi-million dollar initiative with the Conference of Mayors to support and encourage innovation in

fighting childhood obesity,” said American Beverage Association President & Chief Executive Officer Susan Neely. “Initiatives that engage young people in crafting creative strategies to promote their own health, rather than designing solutions for them seems to work best. We’re looking forward to following this project over the course of the next year – we feel that the Lima model may be one that can be adapted by communities across the country.”

Lima won the 2015 Childhood Obesity Prevention Award in the Small City category (population of 100,000 or less). “I’m so pleased that we’ve been gotten recognition for our efforts to fight childhood obesity through the Conference of Mayors and the American Beverage Association,” said Lima Mayor David J. Berger. “Our approach to improving our children’s health is to engage the entire community – first and foremost, the young people themselves. In my experience, if you provide them with the tools and the support, young people are pretty adept at coming up with creative strategies to solving their own problems. This grant from the Conference of Mayors and the American Beverage Association will help us provide our young people with that support.”

In addition to the nationwide recipe development competition, other aspects of Cooking for Change include a “Healthy Eating Crockpot” cooking course for families, at the end of which each family will receive a free crock pot, and a cookbook comprised of healthy recipes created by student chefs.

This is actually the second time that Lima has won the award in its three-year history; Lima also won in 2012 for their “Healthy Living Hubs” initiative.

“Mayor Berger and other Mayors across the country are leading the way in fighting our national childhood obesity epidemic,” said Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of The United States Conference of Mayors. “We know that the best and most creative solutions to many of our nation’s problems are born at the local level, and that’s why this partnership with the American Beverage Association was created – and why it’s so important.”

Following the official presentation, USCM and ABA representatives joined city leaders for a site visit to the Lima Family YMCA.

For more information on the Cooking for Change Program, or on the Childhood Obesity Prevention Awards in general, contact Crystal Swann on The United States Conference of Mayors staff at (202) 861-6707 by telephone, or by e-mail at cswann@usmayors.org. You can also learn more online at www.usmayors.org/childhoodobesity.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are more than 1,200 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Find us online at www.usmayors.org, on facebook.com/usmayors or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.

The American Beverage Association (ABA) is the trade association representing the broad spectrum of companies that manufacture and distribute non-alcoholic beverages in the United States. For more information on ABA, please visit the association’s website at www.ameribev.org or call the ABA communications team at (202) 463-6770.

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