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Kidango Centers Receive Garden Grants from First 5 Alameda County/Every Child Counts

Children to Learn about Growing and Producing Sustainable and Healthy Food

March 21, 2011 (Fremont, CA)- Kidango, a nonprofit child development agency with 41 centers in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, has received grant funding from First 5 Alameda County/Every Child Counts in collaboration with City Slicker Farms to incorporate gardens at six Kidango child development centers in the East Bay.

Through its Backyard Garden Program, City Slickers Farms will provide gardening tools and supplies and work with Kidango staff to guide the centers' children on how to grow fruits and vegetables in their own classroom gardens and enable them to learn about health, nutrition, and self-sufficiency in producing their own food.

City Slickers Farms' mission is to organize and empower community members to meet the immediate and basic need for healthy organic food for themselves and their families by creating high-yield urban farms and backyard gardens. The organization aims to provide a solution that plagues low-income communities in particular, that of a lack of choice for fresh, affordable, healthy food.

The Backyard Garden Program will complement Kidango's nutrition education programs, which also provide opportunities for children to participate in cooking projects, read about different foods in Kidango's Literacy Centers, and take field trips to grocery stores to learn about different foods. City Slickers Farms will continue to work with Kidango teachers for a year on incorporating gardening into the daily classroom curriculum.

The centers receiving the grants are soon-to-be-open Bay (San Lorenzo), Colonial Acres (Hayward) and Dayton (San Leandro) centers, as well as the currently open Amador (Hayward), Marie Kaiser (Fremont) and Nielsen (Dublin) centers. In total, this program will touch the lives of more than 300 preschool age children each year.

"Kidango believes it is important for children to have an opportunity to learn about food, as the food they eat will influence their growth and overall development. With the epidemic of early childhood obesity, Kidango is focusing our meal service and family education to reduce the consumption of foods that contribute to obesity and the onset of early diabetes," said Lorna Knight, Kidango Regional Director. "We are tremendously grateful to First 5 Alameda County, City Slickers Farms and the resources they have provided us to educate our children about growing and eating healthy, nutritious food."

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About City Slicker Farms

The mission of City Slicker Farms is to empower community members to meet the immediate and basic need for food security for themselves and their families through the creation of organic, sustainable, high-yield urban farms and backyard gardens.

About Kidango

As a leader in early care and education, Kidango offers a wide variety of programs to meet the diverse needs of children 0-12 years of age and their families. Currently, Kidango operates 41 child development centers and serves more than 2,500 children and families in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties. Please visit the Kidango website at <http://www.kidango.org/>.

For more information on Kidango please contact Marc Baker at 510-897-6913 or at mbaker@kidango.org