Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Expands Reclaiming Futures, Citing Success in Helping Teens Break the Cycle of Drugs, Alcohol and Crime

(PORTLAND, Ore.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 20, 2007--The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) today announced a national expansion of its Reclaiming Futures initiative, housed at Portland State University, citing the program's success in getting more services to teens in the justice system who are struggling with drugs and alcohol.

The 10 communities that have piloted Reclaiming Futures over the past five years reported significant improvements in the quality of juvenile justice and substance abuse treatment services, according to research conducted by the Urban Institute and the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall Center for Children.

The RWJF board approved $6.5 million to support the 10 pilot sites for two more years and to help additional new sites implement the Reclaiming Futures model over the next four years. The expanded effort also will create a national resource center to provide data, case studies and other information to even more communities seeking to improve drug and alcohol services for justice-involved youth.

"By spreading Reclaiming Futures across the country, we are creating a national movement that can make a vital difference in the health of youth and their families," said Kristin Schubert, RWJF program officer for Reclaiming Futures. "These pilot communities are leading the way."

The Reclaiming Futures model combines system reform, treatment improvement and community engagement to help teens in the justice system get off drugs and alcohol. Teens who enter the justice system with serious drug and alcohol problems rarely receive treatment, even though research shows that young people who use drugs and alcohol are more likely to end up in trouble with the law, behave violently, or
Key elements of the Reclaiming Futures model include screening and assessing teens for drug and alcohol problems; assembling a team to develop a personal care plan; training drug and alcohol treatment providers in evidence-based practices that work with teens; providing family support; and involving community members as mentors and role models to provide the support teens need.

Beginning in 2002, 10 communities helped create and test the Reclaiming Futures model: Anchorage, Alaska; Santa Cruz, Calif.; Chicago, Ill.; four counties in Southeastern Kentucky; Marquette, Mich.; the state of New Hampshire; the Sovereign Tribal Nation of Sicangu Lakota in Rosebud, South Dakota; Dayton, Ohio; Portland, Ore.; and Seattle, Wash.

"During the past five years, we have created a new national standard of care in juvenile justice," said Laura Nissen, Reclaiming Futures national program director and associate professor at Portland State University Graduate School of Social Work. "With this new grant, our 10 original pilot projects can refine the model they created, new sites can help test ways to implement this approach, and eventually dozens of other communities can use what we learn to change the way juvenile courts work with teens with drug and alcohol problems."

Nissen said Reclaiming Futures will invite applications from communities interested in participating as one of the new pilot sites. Successful applicants will be selected in the summer of 2007 and will receive technical assistance, on-site coaching, educational materials and invitations to national conferences and workshops. Application forms will be posted on the Reclaiming Futures Web site in late spring.

**About Reclaiming Futures**

Reclaiming Futures is an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that offers a new approach to helping teenagers caught in the cycle of drugs, alcohol and crime. Reclaiming Futures is housed in the Graduate School of Social Work at the Regional Research Institute at Portland State University. To learn more, visit [www.reclaimingfutures.org](http://www.reclaimingfutures.org).

**About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).