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Media advisory

Through photos, Girl Scouts shed light on what promotes – and discourages – physical activity

WHAT: Armed with cameras, Girl Scouts go on a hunt in their West Side neighborhood to identify the things that help them to be physically active or inhibit physical activity. They will document what they find in photographs and journals. Their perspective will be used by researchers at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio to create new strategies for getting girls moving.

WHEN: President's Day: Monday, Feb. 15, at 1 p.m.

WHERE: Avenida Guadalupe Girl Scout Center, 1410 Guadalupe St., Suite 102, San Antonio.

WHO: The project is led by two researchers from the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center.

- Deborah M. Parra-Medina, Ph.D., M.P.H., professor of epidemiology and biostatistics, studies health disparities in underserved communities and creates behavioral interventions to address disparities in cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases.
- Laura Esparza, M.S., a project coordinator for the Institute for Health Promotion Research, has a master's degree in health and kinesiology. She, too, has designed, implemented and evaluated community interventions to reduce sedentary behavior and increase physical activity among women, youths and underserved populations.

The researchers teamed up with the Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas, which brings deep relationships within the community and a long history of focusing on healthy development for girls.

Girl Scouts between the ages of 11 and 14 will take part in the documentary photography project. (The technique, called "Photovoice" uses photography to tell a story from individuals' perspectives.) The Girl Scouts will split up into groups of two or three and, accompanied by an adult, walk the neighborhood, taking photos that answer the question, "What makes it easy and what makes it hard to be physically active in your neighborhood?"

NOTES: This will be one of several photo excursions the Girl Scouts will take over several months before presenting their work to the community. Their photos, along with information from their parents and other community members, will be used to create interventions that will increase physical activity among adolescent girls, particularly Hispanics. Because the interventions will use low-cost mobile and wireless technology, the Girl Scouts also will complete a survey that examines their technology use.

The project received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

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The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, one of the country's leading health sciences universities, ranks in the top 2 percent of all U.S. institutions receiving federal funding. Research and other sponsored program activity totaled a record \$259 million in fiscal year 2009. The university's schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, health professions and graduate biomedical sciences have produced 27,000 graduates. The \$753 million operating budget supports six campuses in San Antonio, Laredo, Harlingen and Edinburg. For more information on the many ways "*We make lives better*®," visit www.uthscsa.edu.

Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas (GSSWT): In partnership with more than 8,000 adult volunteers, Girl Scouts of Southwest Texas serves 18,000 girls in its 21-county jurisdiction. Girl Scouting helps girls ages 5-17 develop the *courage* to experience new adventures, the *confidence* to defy self-doubt, and the *character* to impact a community. Volunteers are needed to help today's girls make the world a better place. *Change a Life. It's forever. Volunteer.* For more information, visit www.girlscouts-swtx.org.