



CONTACTS:
Mike McGill, O) (703) 535-3819
C) (443) 995-9144
mikem@americaspromise.org

Sue Lomenzo, (703) 535-3864
suel@americaspromise.org

Tammy Papa, Lighthouse Program, (203) 576-7252

America's Promise Alliance Names Bridgeport, Connecticut One of *100 Best Communities for Young People*

Winners Recognized for Efforts to Help Young People Succeed

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. – September 26, 2005 – America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth today announced that Bridgeport, Connecticut is a winner of a first-ever national competition to identify *100 Best Communities for Young People*. The winning communities – ranging from small towns to urban neighborhoods across America – are being celebrated for their commitment to provide healthy, safe and caring environments for young people. **Bridgeport Mayor John M. Fabrizi will host a reception recognizing the more than 50 community partners (see attached list) who contributed to the City's winning application on Wednesday, October 12, 2005 at 12:30 P.M. at the carousel at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, 1875 Noble Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut.**

Bridgeport is receiving the *100 Best* honor, in part, for work to provide the resources children and youth need to become caring and productive adults. The Bridgeport community boasts a number of active community collaborations, and an array of community providers and resources to support children. Some resources available to youths in Bridgeport include: the Lighthouse afterschool program, which provides children with recreational, cultural, and academic activities; Even Start, which provides early intervention services to identify and assist high-risk children; and family resource centers in various neighborhoods.

A complete list of winners can be found at www.americaspromise.org. Members of America's Promise Alliance — including United Way of America, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Junior Achievement, and the YMCA and many others — took leading roles in the *100 Best* competition. *100 Best Communities for Young People* was launched in partnership with Capital One Financial Corporation.

America's Promise Founding Chairman General Colin Powell launched the competition in May and Bridgeport Mayor John M. Fabrizi spearheaded the community effort to apply for this prestigious award. Bridgeport and the other winners were chosen by a distinguished selection panel of civic, business, and nonprofit leaders, including United Way of America President Brian Gallagher, U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Tom Donohue, former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, baseball great Cal Ripken Jr., and former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb.

The selection panel evaluated *100 Best* entries that required detailed information about each community's efforts to fulfill five essential promises critical to the well-being of young people: caring adults who are actively involved in their lives; safe places in which to learn and grow; a healthy start toward adulthood; an effective education that builds marketable skills; and opportunities to help others.

"We have had an amazing response from hundreds of communities, large and small, from Alaska to Florida," said Marguerite W. Sallee, president and CEO of America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth. "Our purpose for launching this competition is to appeal to America's competitive spirit to encourage communities to become great places to grow up. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, we have seen some inspiring examples of what can happen when communities across the country pull together to help people in times of urgent need. In the *100 Best* communities, we have

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witnessed that same spirit at work in making the well being of their children an urgent priority. Their outstanding efforts – to measure how well their children and youth are doing, to put more resources in place, and to form cross-sector partnerships – provide shining examples of what it means to keep America's Promise for our young people.”

“To have been selected as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People from a pool of well over 1200 applications is a testament to Bridgeport's commitment to the well being of children and youths,” explained Mayor Fabrizi. “This was not just a municipal government application. More than 50 organizations and businesses contributed to the process, demonstrating a citywide collaborative effort.”

“It is wonderful to learn first-hand how outstanding communities are making a difference in people's lives – especially their young people,” said Brian Gallagher, president and chief executive officer of United Way of America. “We are committed to helping communities across America follow the examples provided by winning communities and adopt similar programs that will help our nation's young people succeed in life.”

“We are proud to be a part of this important effort to highlight the innovative efforts taking place in communities throughout the United States to create healthy and supportive environments for our children,” said Capital One's executive vice president and general counsel John Finneran. “Like America's Promise, Capital One recognizes that helping to build strong and healthy communities – good places to do business and good places to raise families – benefits us all.”

To honor the *100 Best* communities selected, the America's Promise Alliance will hold a special event November 2nd in Washington, D.C. This celebration will be dedicated to the children affected by Hurricane Katrina, highlighting outstanding community initiatives across the country that are providing displaced children with the services and support that they need to thrive no matter where they are. All proceeds from this event will go toward helping the children impacted by Katrina.

“The same partners who support our children on a daily basis have come together to meet the needs of children and families who have relocated to Bridgeport as a result of Hurricane Katrina,” said Mayor Fabrizi. “We are looking forward to joining the November 2nd celebration that will further benefit these families and children.”

The Alliance also will sponsor a yearlong celebration including a special day in each of the winning communities and a series of regional forums across the country that will enable communities to share their success stories and learn effective strategies from one another that will further enrich the lives of their young people.

“The applications revealed communities that care about their kids and are working together to make their futures better. We saw leaders and people genuinely engaged and full of pride in their towns. Together, they have strengthened my faith in our great country.”

For more details about the *100 Best* competition and the winners, please visit www.americaspromise.org.

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About America's Promise

America's Promise is a broad-based alliance whose members work together to ensure the well being of children and youth. Alliance partners focus attention and resources to help every child receive the Five Promises essential to success: caring adults who are actively involved in their lives; safe places in which to learn and grow; a healthy start toward adulthood; an effective education that builds marketable skills; and opportunities to help others.

Founded by retired General Colin L. Powell, following the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in 1997, the America's Promise Alliance includes nonprofit, corporate, and community groups as well as individuals across the nation. Alma J. Powell currently serves as chair.

America's Promise grew out of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in 1997, where Presidents Bush, Carter, Clinton and Ford, with Nancy Reagan representing President Reagan, challenged the country to make children and youth a national priority. President George W. Bush affirmed his commitment in 2001.