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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Local Non-Profit Awarded Five Year, \$1.2 million “Promoting Responsible Fatherhood” Grant**

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**Grant Supports Award-Winning “No Kidding: Straight Talk From Teen Parents” Program**

AUSTIN, Texas – October 9, 2006 – YouthLaunch, a local non-profit organization, was recently awarded a “Promoting Responsible Fatherhood” federal grant of \$243,173, renewable for up to five years. The United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Family Assistance chose the agency’s award-winning *No Kidding: Straight Talk From Teen Parents* as the recipient of this grant, out of hundreds of applicants from all over the country.

“We are thrilled to have this vote of confidence,” said Russell Smith, LMSW, Executive Director of YouthLaunch. “The demonstration project funding will enable YouthLaunch to broaden and deepen this critical program, providing us with the resources to focus on recruiting and engaging young fathers as peer educators.”

The *No Kidding* program, a partnership between the Texas Attorney General’s office and YouthLaunch, engages teen parents as peer educators in Austin-area middle and high schools, talking to their peers about the rights, responsibilities, and realities of teen parenting. *No Kidding* attempts to reduce the number of teens who become parents by empowering them to make informed decisions based on the true stories of real teen parents. In the 2005-06 school year, *No Kidding* peer educators presented to over 3,000 Austin-area students.

*No Kidding* was recently selected as the finalist for the 2006 Outstanding Emerging Innovation Award for the Healthy Teen Network. In July, the program was the feature program at the annual National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA) conference in Dallas.

Since 1994, YouthLaunch has focused on positive youth development through service programming. YouthLaunch's vision is that all young people develop skills, confidence and resiliency through empowering service and grow into productive, community-minded individuals. The organization has developed, implemented and disseminated innovative programs that exist at the intersection of positive youth development and community service.

Additional information about YouthLaunch and the *No Kidding* program, including a video featuring the peer educators, can be found at [www.youthlaunch.org](http://www.youthlaunch.org).

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