



Contacts: Maddy Wegner
National Youth Leadership Council
mjwegner@nylc.org
(651) 999-7354

Rich Pingeton
State Farm
rich.pingeton.sqvi@statefarm.com
(309) 766-8866

For Immediate Release

300 students Take Action in Their Gulf Coast Communities *Gulf Coast WalkAbout Builds on Success, Goes Year-Round*

Bloomington, IL, -- June 6, 2007 – Three-hundred students – 5th through 8th graders – from Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana will be working hard this summer to continue the rebuilding process in their states. As members of the Gulf Coast WalkAbout program, these students will be making a difference in areas still recovering from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Students will work with teams of teachers, college students and adult volunteers to actively learn about environmental and natural science, emergency preparedness and response, and oral history.

WalkAbout was developed by the National Youth Leadership Council as part of its Resources for Recovery initiative and is funded by State Farm Companies Foundation. It engages youths in community-based service-learning projects and strengthens their basic academic skills.

Three sites (some connecting multiple schools) were selected to participate in this summer's program:

- Charlotte Hyatt Elementary School, Escatawpa Elementary School and Kreole Elementary School (Moss Point, Mississippi)
- Sophie B. Wright Charter School (New Orleans, Louisiana)
- DeQueen Elementary School and Port Arthur Alternative Center (Port Arthur and Groves, Texas)

“All three of these sites participated last summer and did outstanding work,” said NYLC President and CEO Jim Kielsmeier. “These kids addressed the most pressing needs of their communities, repairing local businesses, addressing environmental concerns, helping assisted-living facilities create evacuation plans, and recording oral histories of the floods.”

In fall 2007, these schools will be implementing the WalkAbout program year-round. Projects will address disaster preparedness, community rebuilding and refurbishment, and habitat restoration.

“WalkAbout has helped transform young people from hurricane victims into community leaders,” said Mike Fernandez, Vice President of Public Affairs for State Farm. “This program has had such a positive impact on the students, teachers and their communities. We are proud to be a part of this rebuilding effort and extend the WalkAbout to a year-long program.”

For more information about Resources for Recovery and the WalkAbout program, please visit www.nylc.org/recovery. To set up an interview or photo opportunity with the schools, teachers and students, please contact Maddy Wegner at (651) 999-7354.

About State Farm

State Farm® insures more cars than any other insurer in North America and is the leading U.S. home insurer. State Farm's 17,000 agents and 69,000 employees serve nearly 73 million auto, fire, life and health policies in the United States and Canada. State Farm also offers financial services products through State Farm Bank®. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm family of companies. State Farm is ranked No.19 on the Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, please visit statefarm.com® or in Canada statefarm.ca™.

About the National Youth Leadership Council

For more than two decades, the National Youth Leadership Council® has led a movement linking youths, educators and communities to redefine the roles of young people in society. That movement is service-learning, and it empowers youths to transform themselves from recipients of information and resources into valuable, contributing members of society. NYLC has been at the center of community service and service-learning programs and policy development since 1983. It annually convenes The National Service-Learning Conference, which included representatives from all 50 states and 19 other countries in 2007. NYLC also offers adult and youth trainings, runs model programs and develops service-learning materials.

About Service-Learning

Service-learning is a teaching method that enriches learning by engaging students in meaningful service to their schools and communities. It integrates service with established learning objectives, emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving, and tackles real issues such as hunger, ecological concerns and diversity. For more information, please visit www.nylc.org.

About Gulf Coast WalkAbout

The Gulf Coast WalkAbout is organized in partnership with the Louisiana Serve Commission, Office of Lieutenant Governor; Texas Center for Service-Learning; and Mississippi Department of Education, Learn and Serve America Program.

###