

FINAL DRAFT FOR REVIEW

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**Books that Speak: ‘Reading’ about Nutrition and Physical Activity
Made Fun and Easy for American Indian and Hispanic Migrant Farm worker Families**

--Data Show Low-Literacy Populations Recall Health Messages Heard in Books—

Washington, D.C., May 29, 2007 -- To combat the high incidence of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease among the children of American Indian and Hispanic migrant farm worker families who also have low levels of literacy, the Academy for Educational Development has developed two “speaking books,” which will deliver health messages using sound-chip technology.

The books, titled *Healthy Families, Watch Us Grow!*, promote physical activity and nutrition at the touch of a button, enabling readers to see, read, hear, and understand the material regardless of reading ability. The books’ content is specific to American Indian and Hispanic communities.

Developed in partnership with Books of Hope Inc., the colorful books feature photographs of Hispanic and American Indian children and families participating in fun physical activities, selecting fruits and vegetables, and preparing healthy meals.

“American Indian and Hispanic migrant farm worker families are in a state of crisis when it comes to diabetes, and low literacy makes it difficult to communicate about healthy diets,” said Denise Glyn Borders, Ed.D, senior vice president and director of the AED U.S. Education and Workforce Development Group.

“Speaking books provide an innovative way for us to effectively communicate with these families about the importance of diet and physical activity.”

According to Books of Hope, the speaking books have been successful in delivering health messages to low literacy communities in rural South Africa, where teenagers are at high risk for HIV and AIDS. One study showed the books were seen and listened to by an average of 27 people, and more than 90% of the target group reported that they learned new facts about AIDS and depression from the book. Listeners also demonstrated extremely high retention of the information contained in the books.

AED plans to distribute 70,000 books free of charge to American Indian and Hispanic migrant farmer worker communities, and is currently talking with potential funders.

AED is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to improving health, education, and economic opportunities for the least advantaged in the United States and developing countries throughout the world.

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