

Media Contact:
Sylvia France
Bailey Lauerman
sfrance@baileylauerman.com
phone: 514-9425

GREATER OMAHA RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS UNITED NATION'S WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S SAFE COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

GREATER OMAHA IS THE FOURTH AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND 114TH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO RECEIVE SAFE COMMUNITY DESIGNATION IN EIGHTEEN YEARS

The greater Omaha area, which includes Douglas, Sarpy, Cass and Washington counties in Nebraska and Pottawattamie County in Iowa, has received the United Nation's World Health Organization's Safe Community Designation. Greater Omaha is only the fourth American and 114th international community to receive this prestigious recognition. More than 900 witnessed the signing of the safe community agreement at the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter's Safety and Health Summit Awards luncheon on Thursday, May 17 at the Qwest Center Omaha. Dr. Robert Ekman and Dr. Diana Ekman representing the WHO and the Collaborating Center for Safe Communities in Stockholm, Sweden traveled to Omaha to present the safe communities designation. At the awards luncheon, Mayor Mike Fahey and Mayor Tom Hanafan signed the WHO Safe Communities agreement for the largest cities in the 5 county designated area. Mary Ann Borgeson, Douglas county commissioner; Ron Nolte, Cass county chairman board of supervisors and Brian Hansen representing Paul Cook, chairman; Sarpy County board of commissioners also signed. Duane Wilcox of Washington County and Lynn Leaders of Pottawattamie County will also sign.

This community safety approach is being spearheaded in the United States by the National Safety Council (NSC) to encourage communities to come together to promote safe and healthy behaviors that protect people from hurt and harm in all aspects of their lives. Greater Omaha was one of the first communities to be part of NSC's Safe Communities America network.

"The World Health Organization's Safe Community designation is a testament to the collaboration and commitment of public officials, government entities, corporations, law enforcement, health care, education and related organizations that make Greater Omaha a safer place to live. This puts Omaha in a very elite group of international communities," said Kay Farrell, president and chief executive officer of the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha Chapter. "The WHO Safe Community designation gives us an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the mission of safety and injury prevention in the greater Omaha area."

The Safe Communities concept began its formal existence at the First World Conference on Accident and Injury Prevention held in Stockholm, Sweden in September 1989. During this conference, a resolution was adopted stating that "All human beings have an equal right to health and safety." This is a fundamental

aspect of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Health for All strategy and for the WHO Global Program on Accident Prevention and Injury Control. The term Safe Community implies that the community aspires to safety in a structured approach, not that the community is already perfectly safe. Creative methods of education and environmental change joined with appropriate legislation and enforcement are important facets of community safety.

Founded in 1924, the National Safety Council, Greater Omaha is a private non-profit, community based organization that promotes safety and health by providing programs, resource services and education to individuals and organizations to prevent both the personal and economic loss associated with injuries, accidents and health hazards wherever they exist. For more information, visit www.safenebraska.org.

Sylvia France
Bailey Lauerma
sfrance@baileylauerman.com
phone: 514-9425
cell phone: 250-5478