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Arizona Department of Public Safety announces Statewide Partnership with the Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

Roger Vanderpool, Director of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, and Olivia McCormick, President of the Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, will announce a unique statewide partnership today. The partnership couples the expertise of the State of Arizona's largest law enforcement team with the state's largest youth development program to address crime and substance abuse prevention. The press conference will be held at 2:00 p.m. at the Gilbert Boys & Girls Club, 44 North Oak Street, Gilbert, Arizona.

"Boys & Girls Clubs work," said Vanderpool. "When the Boys & Girls Clubs opened a clubhouse in Arizona City in 2003, there was a 50% reduction in vandalism and academic test scores went up at the school. Nothing else changed in the community that year, so it is clear that the drop in crime and the increase in test scores was a direct result of the Club opening. As the Director of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, I am absolutely sold on Boys & Girls Clubs."

The partnership will include DPS officers working directly with the 55 Clubhouses around the state, as volunteers and as resources for the Clubs' premier prevention program, SMART® Moves. Local DPS officers will receive SMART® Moves training that they can use at the boys and girls clubs and on the streets when dealing with youths.

"I am just as interested in what officers do off duty in their communities as I am in what they do on duty," Vanderpool said. "Community based policing really begins when the badge and gun belt come off and our officers become involved in making a difference in the community. Making differences in the community and helping youths make the right choices helps law enforcement and hopefully will develop future candidates to recruit as officers."

"We could not be more pleased with this partnership," stated Olivia McCormick, President of the Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs. "It is perfect, in that we work so closely with local law enforcement in our clubhouses around the state already. Adding the expertise of DPS will be even more meaningful to the over 50,000 kids we serve everyday."

SMART® Moves incorporates current research about problems confronting young people and provides viable solutions to help them handle challenging circumstances while avoiding risky and unhealthy behaviors. This year-round program encourages collaborations among Club staff, youth, parents and representatives from other community organizations. Based on research and best practices from prevention specialists, the SMART Moves program has been successful for more than a decade in Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide and in Arizona for nine years.

SMART® Moves is unique compared to programs conducted by other community based organizations. In fact, no other community based organization besides Boys & Girls Clubs has SMART® Moves. It is proven effective for anti-drug, anti-alcohol and anti-gang activity by the U.S. Department of Justice. The program is so widely praised that it is also used to teach youth in classroom settings, besides Clubhouses. Additionally, participants of SMART® Moves programs are Club members, which gives them the opportunity to participate in a variety of other programs like Citizenship and Leadership development, Educational development, Life Skills, Health and Physical fitness and the Arts and Technology.

*Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs and Arizona Department of Public Safety:
SMART Partnership for Arizona*

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