



For Immediate Release

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Team SunSmart™ Program Launches in NJ High Schools

Yogi Berra, Foundation Board Member, encourages all athletes to include sunscreen in their equipment bag

Montclair, NJ, March 4, 2011 – The Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (RFMF) is pleased to announce the launch of Team SunSmart™, an exciting new program designed to educate student athletes in New Jersey about the damaging effects of too much sun exposure. Some scientists estimate that a child who wears sunscreen everyday will cut his or her risk of developing skin cancer as an adult by as much as 70%. This spring, Team SunSmart™ will provide sunscreen to as many as 86,000 athletes from across the state (that's more than 2,700 teams from 400+ schools) while educating them about the necessity of applying sunscreen prior to outdoor practices or games and reapplying often throughout the day.

Yogi Berra, Yankee Hall of Famer and RFMF Advisory Board Member, said, "This is a great idea! I wish we knew when we were kids that we should wear sunscreen – I might not have all of these wrinkles now. I know guys who have had lots of moles removed, so I want to make sure all of the kids today wear sunscreen and put it in their equipment bags so they always have it."

"The hope is that before players lace up their cleats or put on their protective padding, they will apply a generous layer of sunscreen to their faces, arms, legs and any other areas of exposed skin," says **Teri Festa, president of the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (RFMF)**, which is committed to educating everyone on the importance of the prevention and early detection of melanoma.

Knowing that teens are a particularly vulnerable group, the RFMF has partnered with the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) to introduce the Team SunSmart™ education program. Information about skin cancer, UV exposure and the positive impact sunscreen protection will be disseminated to athletic directors and coaches across the state who, in turn, will educate the student-athletes on up to 2,700 teams. The RFMF anticipates the message of living SunSmart™ to reach the entire student body at many schools.

"Throughout the outdoor sporting seasons, New Jersey student athletes often are in the sun for prolonged periods of time and we want to help make sure they are protected," says **Steven Timko, NJSIAA executive director**. "Education is our first line of defense and with the cooperation of athletic directors and coaches across the state, we are confident that we can make some significant changes in the behavior of our student-athletes."

SAVING LIVES THROUGH AWARENESS

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The Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation is a registered 501(c)3 20-4126123

In addition to sunscreen and educational materials, the RFMF has created a Facebook Fan page and a Team SunSmart™ Video Contest to help spread the word amongst teens. In time, the RFMF hopes to make Team SunSmart™ a national awareness program.

For more information about the program, to register your high school spring team or to learn more about the RFMF, visit www.rayfesta.org.

About the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation (www.rayfesta.org)

The mission of the Ray Festa Melanoma Foundation is to educate on the importance of early detection and the prevention of melanoma. As a youth-targeted organization, we strive to change behavior and make the act of applying sunscreen to become as commonplace as wearing a seatbelt is today. Much of this work is being done by aligning with sports leagues, teams and athletes. Ray Festa died of melanoma in 1992 at the young age of 53. He was diagnosed too late. His family took their unfortunate story and, along with others, formed the Foundation to both honor his memory and help save others from his regrettable fate. For additional information, interviews and press kits, contact Teri Festa at teri@rayfesta.org or 973.744.3557. Find us on Facebook and Twitter.

About NJSIAA

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association, founded in 1918, is a voluntary, non-profit organization made up of 433 accredited public, private and parochial high schools in the state. The New Jersey Association joining with the other forty nine State Associations constitutes the National Federation of State High School Associations which has represented the best interests of high school athletics since 1920, and today represents 22,000 schools, more than 330,000 coaches, and almost 4.5 million high school athletes.

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