



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: BRUNELLA REID, SR. MANAGER

[843-813-4499/BRUNELLA@SHAPIRO.COM](mailto:BRUNELLA@SHAPIRO.COM)

Samuel Shapiro & Company, Inc. Recognized as an American Heart Association Start! Fit-Friendly Company

Companies take steps to decrease healthcare expenses, increase productivity

(BALTIMORE, AUGUST 3, 2011) – Samuel Shapiro & Company, Inc. has been recognized as a Platinum-Level Start! Fit-Friendly Company by the American Heart Association’s Start! initiative for helping employees eat better and move more.

“Physical activity and employee wellness are important priorities at Shapiro. We are honored and excited to be recognized by the American Heart Association’s Start! movement as a Platinum-Level Start! Fit-Friendly Company,” said Margie Shapiro, President and CEO. “We’re committed to providing the best workplace environment possible. This will benefit our employees’ health and produce even more positive results for our company overall.”

Platinum-level employers:

- Offer employees physical activity options in the workplace
- Promote a wellness culture in the workplace
- Implement at least nine criteria outlined by the American Heart Association in the areas of physical activity, nutrition and culture
- Demonstrate measurable outcomes related to workplace wellness

The Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program is a catalyst for positive change in the American workforce by helping companies make their employees’ health and wellness a priority.

American employers face increasing healthcare expenses and health-related losses in productivity that cost an estimated \$225.8 billion a year. Many American adults spend most of their waking hours at sedentary jobs. Their lack of regular physical activity raises their risk for a host of medical problems, such as obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Employers face \$12.7 billion in annual medical expenses due to obesity alone. Start! helps change corporate cultures by motivating employees to start walking, which has the lowest dropout rate of any physical activity.

Recognition is a critical component of the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program. Employers that join this program qualify for official recognition by the American Heart Association. They are listed on the program’s national Web site. Qualifying companies also have the right to use the program’s annual recognition seal for internal communications and with external, recruitment-related communications.

Participating companies also get free access to program resources such as the free Start! Walking Program, materials to help promote company wellness programs to employees, internal newsletter templates and consultation on CPR/AED (automated external defibrillator) programs.

Start! also offers MyStart! Online, a free Web-based fitness and nutrition tracker for companies and individuals. A “dashboard” feature lets HR or wellness managers view employee participation in Start!

“The Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program offers a unique, easy-to-implement opportunity for corporations to increase employees’ physical activity, which will help improve their health – and their employers’ bottom line,” said Janell Rotella, Accounting/HR Manager. “Even people who haven’t exercised regularly until middle age can reap significant benefits by starting a walking program. A study published in 1986 in the New England Journal of Medicine found that some adults may gain two hours of life expectancy for every hour of regular, vigorous exercise they performed.”

For more information about the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program and how it is helping to improve the health of Americans by focusing on an activity that is convenient, free and easy, call 410-685-7074 or visit www.startwalkingnow.org.

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About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America’s No. 1 and No. 3 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or join us, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or any of our offices around the country, or visit heart.org.