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Longview In Top 100 Cities For Youth

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The City of Longview has been named as a winner of the America's Promise Alliance 2008 100 Best Communities for Young People competition. America's Promise Alliance (The Alliance), is the nation's largest alliance dedicated to children and youth. The 100 Best competition recognizes the 100 outstanding communities across America—large and small, rural and urban—that are the best places for young people to live. Communities in all 50 states applied for the honor this year.

According to Longview Mayor Jay Dean, "This designation is an honor for our great city and is evidence of our community's commitment to help youth be all that they can be. Creating a healthy community for youth doesn't happen overnight. It is a sustained effort that requires a shared vision and long-term planning. This award affirms our work to develop healthy and resilient youth in Longview."

Longview's application was submitted by Partners in Prevention, whose mission is to work with others in the community to create a safe, healthy, drug-free community. "The 100 Best Communities award is the result of true collaboration at work in our city. We partner with schools, businesses, media, youth, parents, non-profit agencies, law enforcement, and anyone with a common desire to support and engage youth in the community," said Holly Fuller, Partners in Prevention Manager.

Longview was named one of America's 100 Best communities in large part because of the city's great mentoring programs. The Forever Friends and Co-Pilots mentoring programs have 200 adults who serve as mentors. These adults are screened and receive training before being matched with students in elementary through high school in a six county area. Mentors meet with students on the school campus one time per week as well as other times outside of school for special events. The program has resulted in at least 4,000 hours of mentoring per school year. Longview also offers a variety of job shadowing programs through which young people can explore different careers. One such program, called Explorers, offers students interested in law enforcement careers the opportunity to witness the work of the Longview Police Department. Other agencies in Longview, such as the East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and the Longview Wellness Center, present information to encourage young people to make healthy life choices.

"The prosperity of every community and this country depends on how well we care for our children and youth," said Marguerite W. Kondracke, president and CEO, America's Promise Alliance, "Although no place is perfect, when we have communities, like Longview, Texas, that make young people a priority and have all the resources necessary to lead healthy, productive lives, we must recognize them and by extension inspire other cities and towns to follow their lead."

The 100 Best competition was first held in 2005. The 2008 winners were selected by a distinguished panel that included some of the nation's most well-known civic, business and nonprofit leaders such as: Gayle Manchin, first lady of West Virginia; Brian Gallagher, United Way President; Wellington Webb, former Mayor of Denver and President of Webb Group International; Thomas Donohue, president and CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Carol Coletta, president and CEO, CEOs for Cities; Christine James-Brown, president and CEO, the Child Welfare League of America; and Dr. Suzanne Morse, executive director of the Pew Partnership for Civic Change.

For more details about the 100 Best competition visit the City of Longview website at www.CityofLongview.com or America's Promise Alliance website at www.americaspromise.org.

