



News Release

Contact: Holly Fuller

hfuller@longviewtexas.gov

903-237-1019

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Longview Named One of Nation's 100 Best Communities for Young People

(Longview, TX) Longview achieved national recognition as one of America's Promise Alliance's *100 Best Communities for Young People* presented by ING for its initiatives to help young people. The competition recognizes communities across the country that focus on reducing high school dropout rates and providing service and support to their youth. Longview is a two-time *100 Best* winner, previously receiving the honor in 2008.

Longview will receive a \$2,500 grant, signage identifying the community as one of the nation's *100 Best Communities for Young People*, and access to America's Promise Alliance's community development resources. This year, more than 300 communities from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were nominated for the *100 Best* distinction. The winners are a diverse group, ranging from small communities to large cities. Winners were chosen by a distinguished panel of 20 judges that included: Marc Morial, president and CEO, National Urban League, Roxanne Spillett, president and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and Michelle Shearer, Chemistry Teacher, Urbana High School, 2011 National Teacher of the Year. A list of all 2011 winners can be found at www.americaspromise.org/100best.

"This award showcases the work of the entire community: the schools, nonprofits, businesses, and the City of Longview," said Mayor Jay Dean. "I think that it's an all inclusive effort that has made Longview a great place for our kids. We have to keep investing in the young people of Longview and encouraging them to be part of building our future."

Longview was selected as one of the *100 Best Communities for Young People* for numerous reasons including the community's abundant after-school programs, youth recreation activities, and numerous volunteer opportunities. In addition, the City of Longview allocates approximately 10 percent of the annual budget for community services that directly benefit its youth. As a part of the Partners in Prevention department, the Youth Action Committee allows young people to participate in numerous community volunteer projects, leadership development exercises and provide a youth voice when reporting to the City of Longview departments. Partners in Prevention has a mentoring program that offers year-round, out-of-school youth programming including athletic and art classes, money management and life skills classes. The Longview Economic Development Corporation Workforce Academy helps prepare local students for higher education by holding evening classes for college credits. Through these efforts, Longview's graduation rate remains above 70 percent. Overall, residents remain committed to helping young people maneuver the challenges faced on the road to adulthood.

“In a nation where 7,000 students drop out of high school every day, we hope Longview’s initiatives inspire other communities across the nation to take action to solve the challenges facing their young people,” said Marguerite W. Kondracke, America’s Promise Alliance president and CEO. “Longview is especially deserving of this recognition due to their efforts to ensure that their young people graduate high school and go on to lead healthy, productive lives. Longview refuses to let the challenges they face determine the future for their young people. Instead, they are helping their youth prosper and become contributing members of society.”

“The issues surrounding youth education and success are of vital importance to ING,” said Mims. “Our ongoing support for *100 Best* underscores our commitment to the cause and the value we place on recognizing communities that produce measurable results for youth.”

At 11:00 a.m. CT, October 12, 2011, Kondracke will join America’s Promise Alliance Chair Alma Powell and ING Foundation President Rhonda Mims at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., to officially announce the 100 winning communities in a live webcast.

About 100 Best Communities for Young People

First held in 2005, the *100 Best* competition is one of the Alliance’s signature initiatives and is part of its Grad Nation campaign, which is a 10-year initiative to mobilize Americans to end the high school dropout crisis and prepare young people for college and the 21st century workforce. The *100 Best* honors communities large and small, rural and urban, that are making progress to help young people achieve their potential, which includes earning a high school diploma, securing a good job, and playing an active, productive role in America’s economic vitality.

All communities entering the *100 Best* competition completed a rigorous application where they provided details on how their existing programs and initiatives help deliver the Five Promises—resources identified by the Alliance as being critical to the development of healthy, successful children: caring adults; safe places; healthy start; effective education; and opportunities to help others. Applicants were also asked to describe how different sectors of their community work together to help children and families overcome challenges. Most importantly, communities were judged on the strength and innovation of their efforts and programs to help young people graduate from high school prepared for college and the 21st century workforce.

Being a *100 Best* community not only demonstrates commitment to local young people; the award fosters local pride, bolsters economic development and shines the spotlight on the people and programs that are building better communities. The competition also facilitates the sharing of best practices among communities nationwide regarding education, access to health care, reading score improvement, youth service and pre-school enrollment, among many other areas.

About America’s Promise Alliance

America’s Promise Alliance is the nation’s largest partnership organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth by raising awareness, supporting communities, and engaging in nonpartisan advocacy. Through our Grad Nation campaign, we harness the collective power of our partner network to mobilize Americans to end the high school dropout crisis and prepare young people for college and the 21st century workforce. Building on the legacy of our Founding Chairman General Colin Powell, the Alliance believes the success of our young people is grounded in the Five Promises—caring adults; safe places; a healthy start; an effective education; and opportunities to help others. For more information about America’s Promise Alliance, visit www.americaspromise.org.

***P.O. Box 1952 300 W. Cotton St. Longview, TX 75606 903-237-1000 phone 903-237-1009 fax
www.CityofLongview.com***

About ING

ING is a global financial institution of Dutch origin offering banking, investments, life insurance, and retirement services to over 85 million residential, corporate and institutional clients in more than 40 countries. With a diverse workforce of about 115,000 people, ING is dedicated to setting the standard in helping our clients manage their financial future.

In the U.S., the ING (NYSE: ING) family of companies offers a comprehensive array of financial services to retail and institutional clients, which includes life insurance, retirement plans, mutual funds, managed accounts, alternative investments, direct banking, institutional investment management, annuities, employee benefits, and financial planning. ING holds top-tier rankings in key U.S. markets and serves nearly 30 million customers across the nation.

ING's diversity management philosophy and commitment to workplace diversity, diversity marketing, corporate citizenship and supplier diversity fosters an inclusive environment for employees that supports a distinctive product and service experience for the financial services consumer. For more information, visit www.ing.com/us.

About the ING Foundation

The ING Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life in communities where ING operates and its employees and customers live. Through charitable giving and employee volunteerism, the foundation focuses on programs in the areas of financial literacy, children's education, diversity, and environmental sustainability. For more information, visit www.ing-usafoundation.com.