

# ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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## *Media Release*

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **New website offers tool for faith communities to fight childhood obesity and promote health**

On Sept. 21, 2010, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership will launch **faithandwellness.org**, featuring the latest tool in the effort to prevent childhood obesity and promote wellness in Oregon and nationwide. The website is a product of the two-year Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded **Congregational Wellness Project**. EMO was one of 22 grantees nationwide to initiate pilot projects under the foundation's innovative faith-based advocacy initiative.

Aimed at both religious congregations and the general community, **faithandwellness.org** features the **Congregational Health Index (CHI)** tool, created by EMO and Community Health Partnership, Oregon's Public Health Institute. This unique tool helps congregations examine health factors in their environment, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make changes in policies, practices and building and grounds use to create healthy eating and physical activity opportunities. Other website resources include prayers and readings from various faith traditions, a handbook for faith community food access projects, advocacy tips and sample policies that enhance community health.

Since the project's start, eight congregations in Portland and rural Benton County have tested the CHI tool and used it as a springboard to begin conversations about wellness, develop leadership around the issue, and inspire healthy changes from offering healthy food at fellowship times to converting unused land to community gardens and active play areas.

For information in English or Spanish, contact Laura Raymond, Congregational Wellness Project Coordinator in Portland, at [lraymond@emoregon.org](mailto:lraymond@emoregon.org) or (503) 939-7507 or Marcela Arredondo, Wellness Specialist, at (541) 908-4123 or [marredondo@emoregon.org](mailto:marredondo@emoregon.org). For general information on IFFP, call Jenny Holmes, Project Director, at (503) 221-1054, ext. 214.

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO's) Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns connects, inspires, informs and empowers people, congregations and religious institutions to work for justice and the care and renewal of the Earth. The Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership empowers faith communities, farmers and neighborhoods to build rural-urban alliances and innovative partnerships for just and sustainable food systems that promote community health. EMO is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.*