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***** Media Release *****



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**Jacksonville Jaguars and United Way Team Up For
9th Annual Hometown Huddle**

JACKSONVILLE, FL—The Jacksonville Jaguars and United Way of Northeast Florida teamed up for Hometown Huddle today at the Woodland Acres Boys and Girls Club and Woodland Acres Elementary School to provide a day of fitness, as an opportunity to give back to the community, to more than 250 Arlington youth.

This year's theme, *Youth Fitness*, conveys the importance of staying active and healthy. Research shows that 63 percent of children will be physically inactive by the time they reach high school. Children who are fit have a stronger self-image, more self-confidence, and demonstrate greater improvement in health-related fitness. On hand from the Jaguars were Quinn Gray (QB), Brent Hawkins (DE/LB), Kenny Pettway (LB), Clint Ingram (LB), Mercedes Lewis (TE) and Tony McDaniel (DT).

“United Way is pleased to be part of this exciting partnership with the NFL and locally the Jacksonville Jaguars,” said Connie Hodges, president of United Way of Northeast Florida. “Hometown Huddle resonates because it’s focused on something every one of us can do—give back to our local community. And especially this year we’re pleased to join the Jaguars in raising

awareness about the importance of youth fitness. It's only if we work together to make a collective impact that we will be able to make positive, lasting change in the lives of First Coast residents.”

In keeping with that theme, United Way of Northeast Florida and the Jacksonville Jaguars worked side by side with Woodland Acres Boys and Girls Club, Full Service Schools of Jacksonville, and volunteers from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida to construct a new state-of-the-art playground and additional landscaping for the recreational area. Jaguar players, students and volunteers assembled slides, painted picnic tables, and planted flowers. Jaguar players also partnered with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida volunteers to lead the Jaguars Gatorade Junior Training Camp, a fitness challenge course, with 200 students from TEAM UP, an after-school program at nearby Woodland Acres Elementary School. Students participated in agility exercises, football drills and learned first-hand from Jaguars players about the importance of staying healthy and active every day.

Over the past eight years, 33 NFL teams have joined local United Ways for Hometown Huddle. During this national day of community service, NFL players put down their shoulder pads and assist people in their communities. On average, more than 300 players, team representatives and their families interact with thousands of people who benefit from United Way support.

Now in its 34th year, the NFL and United Way partnership is proof that more can be accomplished collectively than any one group or person can do alone. The NFL and United Way partnership is the most visible and longest running charitable collaboration of its kind. For more than three decades, the partnership has been an example of the tangible good that can be leveraged when two household icons are harnessed into a powerful vehicle for real change in our communities.

United Way of Northeast Florida works in partnership with volunteers, community organizations, and leaders to tackle critical issues facing children, youth, and families. United Way makes lasting changes that improve the lives of people in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and northern St. Johns counties. In addition, United Way leads United Way 2-1-1, a 24/7 information referral hotline; Life: Act 2, a proactive response to an exploding senior population; Full Service Schools, a community approach to removing barriers to academic success. For more information, call 904-390-3200 or visit www.aboutunitedway.org.

Boys and Girls Club of Northeast Florida has played an integral role in Jacksonville for 45 years, providing daily after-school programs to nearly 1,100 young people daily at 11 facilities in Duval, Nassau, and St. Johns Counties. Its mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens.

Full Service Schools of Jacksonville, in partnership with the Jacksonville Children's Commission, Duval County Health Department, Duval County Public Schools, Lucy Gooding Charitable Foundation Trust, and United Way of Northeast Florida, is a neighborhood-based collaboration that seeks to remove non-academic barriers to a child's success. Services provided include family counseling, mentoring, medical help and tutoring. Full Service Schools are located in seven Jacksonville neighborhoods with an eighth school opening in Fall 2007.

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