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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SITE SECURED FOR JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE YOUTH CENTER; MAJOR GIFTS ANNOUNCED BY ANHEUSER-BUSCH, MONSANTO, CASINO QUEEN, GREATER EAST ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY FUND

EAST ST. LOUIS, July 23, 1996 -- Jackie Joyner-Kersee, set to embark on her final Olympic quest, paused Tuesday to announce that major corporate and community donations will allow her to push forward with her other dream: to build a youth center in her native East St. Louis.

Monsanto Fund, The Anheuser-Busch Foundation and Casino Queen all announced pledges of $1 million to support construction and operation of the center. The Greater East St. Louis Community Fund announced a gift totaling $600,000 for operations during the Center's first three years.

"These generous gifts have turned my dreams into a workable plan, and I am convinced that the momentum begun today will result in a facility dedicated to motivating, educating and preparing thousands of youth to fulfill their dreams," Ms. Joyner-Kersee said.

Ms. Kersee, through the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Youth Center Foundation, hopes to initially raise $10 million -- $5 million for Phase I facility construction and $5 million for an endowment to support ongoing operating expenses. Construction will begin after the $10 million goal is reached.

The initial phase will consist of a multi-purpose indoor recreation and education center, plus baseball and football fields and wellness center.

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add one -- Jackie

Eventually, the group hopes to raise an additional $6 million for subsequent phases of construction that would include a performing arts auditorium, track and soccer fields, indoor swimming pool and other items. The site, in East St. Louis near Interstate 64 and Twenty Fifth Street, encompasses 37 acres adjacent to Kenneth Hall Park.

James H. Davis, executive vice president of the Boatman's National Bank and president of the Youth Center Foundation, said the group "is especially grateful to the East St. Louis Park District, which worked with the Foundation for the future acquisition of Park District property that was vital to this project."

Davis added that the foundation will launch a nationwide fund-raising effort, and the local corporate support announced Tuesday is a solid platform for this effort. "We can't be any more excited that Anheuser-Busch Foundation, Monsanto Fund, the Casino Queen and the Greater East St. Louis Community Fund have chosen to back this project. Their support is essential in driving additional backing from the St. Louis area and beyond, to ensure the long-term success and viability of this project," Davis said.

"We are pleased to be able to continue our commitment to our neighbors and to the well-being of young people by investing in this important project," said Russell F. Sackett, plant manager of Monsanto's W.G. Krummrich Plant, Sauget, Ill.

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add two -- Jackie

"We are proud to help underwrite a facility dedicated to advancing the dreams and potential of youth throughout East St. Louis. The Youth Center is a tribute to the vision and leadership of Jackie Joyner-Kersee and others in the East St. Louis community, and we are proud to partner with them in making it a reality," said John E. Jacob, a member of the board of trustees of the Anheuser-Busch Foundation, and executive vice president and chief communications officer of Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.

The mission of the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Youth Center is to motivate, educate and prepare youth to become productive, responsible citizens. To the maximum extend possible, the Youth Center will coordinate a total community effort to emphasize existing programs, and initiate new programs that will impact youth and their families for life preparation.

Besides Davis, officers of the foundation are: David Dorr, vice president; Linda Darnece-Jones, secretary; Louis Tiemann, treasurer.

Board members include: Bill Badgley, James D. Bess, William J. Boyle, Jr., Donna Brandin, Henry Brown, Mary Cannon, Ron Capek, John Carthen Jr., Nino Fennoy, Dr. Herschel Garrett, Della Gray, Gerald Higginbotham, Tom Holley, James G. Koman, William J. Koman Sr., Ralph Korte, Dr. Earl Lazerson, Martin Mathews, James R. Orso, Judson Pickard, Lee Reid, Dr. Ted Savage, Jackie Smith, Denise Williams, Dr. Katie Wright.

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