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Statement of U.S. Rep. Kenny Hulshof Submitted for Inclusion in the Record June 26, 2008

Madam Speaker: In my twelve years in Congress, I have been privileged to work with numerous organizations throughout my Congressional District; agencies that are making an impact in the future of their communities. It is in that vein that today I wish to recognize Kids In Motion for their service to Hannibal, Missouri.

Twelve years ago, local law enforcement officials and concerned citizens of Hannibal met to discuss reported gang activity in the town. As a result of the meeting, several leaders in the community took upon themselves the responsibility and initiative to create this program, Kids In Motion, as a program designed to combat these problems. While several local volunteers stepped up to make KIM a success, I specifically remember meeting numerous times with Marilyn Cohn and Sherri Steinmann, two local business and community leaders who dedicated many of their weeks, months, and even years in the program's infancy to make sure this effort was a success.

KIM is designed as a pre-employment and life success training program for at-risk youth between the ages of 12 and 15 years old. KIM's mission is a simple, yet important, one for the region. The program teaches teens and pre-teens to value work, value their community, and to value their future. Youth are provided transportation to and from their project sites, and they also receive breakfast and lunch. In Hannibal, KIM has partnered with the local Parks and Recreation Department, Tourism Bureau, Public School District, Housing Authority, and other civic groups and agencies in summer projects to benefit the community.

I've had the privilege of speaking at several KIM programs in the past, encouraging KIM members to apply themselves to their work and their communities as well. Being a former prosecutor, I've explained to the attendees the importance of choices they'll be making in their lives and how those choices can help shape their lives in years to come. Each year, I've marveled at the program's impact in the lives of pre-teens in Hannibal, shaping their lives and their futures for the impressionable and important years to come.

Each year we read about a striking decline in the number of volunteers, particularly younger citizens, who choose to take part in civic or community betterment efforts. Yet through this program, we see the rekindling of that flame, all the while providing a vehicle for these at-risk youth to spend their summers in a productive, rather than destructive, manner.

KIM encourages personal responsibility and self-reliance, preparing participants to successfully enter the workforce. Enrolled youth members are able to perform various community service projects in a supervised setting to benefit their community. While performing these services, they learn teamwork, good work habits, and a respect for authority. Through KIM's early intervention into the lives of these youth, the organization is able to redirect values and influence positive behavior and lifestyle choices. KIM also attempts to empower youth to improve their lives and eventually achieve their dreams.

Now under the watchful eye of Amy Vaughn and Douglass Community

Services in Hannibal, the program is taking steps to not only serve Hannibal, but the surrounding areas as well. Amy dreamed for some time of taking the program to different communities in the region, helping to provide each of them with the opportunities afforded Hannibal over the last decade. Now, Amy's dream is becoming a reality. This month, the program is expanding to Louisiana and Bowling Green in Pike County, Missouri. Each of the three participating communities realizes the value of this organization and how it can affect the lives of youth both now and in the future.

KIM is very special because the effort was formed as a volunteer organization with no selfish motivation whatsoever. The program was pursued as a way not just to help address community concerns, but to provide a better and brighter future for Hannibal's leaders of tomorrow. Those efforts have now expanded beyond Hannibal's borders and beyond the wildest dreams of success held by the founders of the organization. Local law enforcement agencies, community businesses, business leaders, and local school officials have joined forces to make this project a success. But the selfless nature of the program is what continues its appeal yet today.

As June is Kids In Motion's annual kickoff month for their summer program, they have named this month "Kids In Motion" month. On this occasion, I congratulate KIM on their tremendous record to date, and I wish them continued success for future years to come.