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And the Envelope Please

Dateline Houston. January 12, 2009. Gracie Cavnar has been the recipient of seven awards in the last year alone—from Houston groups, national organizations, Dr. Oz and even the President of the United States—and they just keep coming. What's all the fuss about?

Cavnar smiles, "Yes, an overnight sensation after only a decade of 24/7 work." The attention comes because of the unique program to combat childhood obesity that Cavnar designed and launched in Houston as a national model. The speed at which she was able to put her grassroots efforts in place is what leaves observers amazed. According to national philanthropist Sara Morgan-founder of both Houston Center for Contemporary Craft and Friends of Alvin Ailey, "Grace Cavnar is hell on wheels! I have never seen anyone take an idea from research to reality in so little time with such intelligence, enthusiasm, tenacity and good humor. The breadth of Recipe for Success is mind-boggling." Activist Lynda Transier, who serves on the board of Child Advocates, agrees "Gracie saw a need, and instead of just talking about it, she did something!" Cavnar demurs, "It's just because I don't take no for an answer."

Recipe for Success Foundation (RFS), now in its third year in Houston elementary schools with a waiting list of over 30 schools and districts, is poised to launch nationally. Following Gracie's mantra that "good food is fun," RFS staff and volunteers teach their *Seed-to-Plate Nutrition Education™* to more than 3,000 elementary-age children each month using its innovative, custom-designed programming like *Chefs in Schools™*, *Recipe Gardens™*, *Kids Cooking* and *Kids Gardening After School™* and *Eat This! Summer Camp™*. The largest sustained outreach of its kind in the nation, more than forty-five of Houston's finest professional chefs regularly volunteer to teach children to cook.

If you'd like to send an award her way, Cavnar can be tracked down at the Foundation's offices, or with her sleeves rolled up in the classroom, because she continues to serve as the fulltime, pro-bono executive director of RFS. Obviously unfamiliar with the concept of leisure time, she has also authored a cookbook/adventure story for kids that will be on shelves in 2010. ***Eat it! food adventures*** tells the tale of a pint-sized stowaway on Marco Polo's voyage who discovers wondrous foods in his travels that are very much like his favorite pasta and pizza dishes back home.

100% of book sales will go to RFS. Cavnar has big things on tap for the future of RFS besides the book and more school implementations across the country. Other plans include an urban organic farm and a nationally televised cooking show for kids. Those who know her never question whether these visions will come to pass. As Houston Mayor Bill White observes, "Gracie Cavnar gets things done."

Cavnar is available to speak to business, community and association groups interested in the issues and solutions surrounding childhood obesity, creative philanthropy, or the power of one person to bring about profound societal changes. For more information about Cavnar or RFS contact info@recipe4success.org. ###END### **Quality digital images and video available.**

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