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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FREDDY JONES NAMED SPOKESPERSON  
FOR OREGON NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM**

**BEND, Ore. (Oct. 17, 2005)** – NBA star and University of Oregon graduate Freddy Jones has agreed to be the spokesperson for the Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program (OYCP), the only statewide alternative school for high school dropouts in Oregon.

“The Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program provides education and life-skills training for high school dropouts who want to become productive and responsible adults,” said Jones, a guard with the Indiana Pacers and a graduate of Gresham High School near Portland. “I am pleased to represent the program because it provides the structure and educational opportunity for at-risk youth to succeed. I look forward to helping raise awareness about the program as well as working with the Cadets and Cadre.”

Jones, the Pacer’s 2002 first-round draft choice and the 2004 NBA Sprite Rising Star Slam Dunk Champion, was chosen to be a spokesperson for the program after students in a recent OYCP class identified him as an Oregonian teens admired and respected. He has a bachelor’s degree in sociology; Jones will appear in the program’s public service announcements, collateral materials and Web site, and will participate in OYCP activities.



“Freddy Jones is an excellent role model who values hard work and education which are at the core of our program,” said COL Mike Caldwell, Deputy Director for State Affairs at the Oregon National Guard. “We are delighted to be associated with Freddy and very pleased and appreciative that he has agreed to represent our Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program. We look forward to involving him in our activities as his time permits during the upcoming NBA season.”

The National Guard Youth Challenge Program is a voluntary 17-month program that provides at-risk youth (high school dropouts) aged 16 to 18 with a second chance to succeed. Cadets work through a two-phase program, beginning with an intensive

five-and-one-half month residential program during which they develop life-coping skills, perform community service work and attend academic classes leading to a high school diploma, GED, or recovery of as many as 8.5 high school credits.

The program, free to Cadets and their families, is followed by one year of mentoring by a responsible adult in the Cadet's home community. During this time, Cadets receive encouragement and support in implementing their life plan as they re-enter their home environments. Since 1995, more than 3,000 Cadets from urban and rural areas of Oregon have entered the Oregon National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program.

In addition to his commitment to OYCP, Jones has been an active supporter of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana. He has donated ticket blocks to the organization's academic achievers program and Kids on Deck, a group of primarily African-American "Littles" who are on a waiting list for mentors. In addition to ticket contributions, he enjoys spending time with the "Littles" and their mentors post-game. Also, he and Pacer teammate Jeff Foster hosted the organization's 2003 Holiday Hoopla, an evening of celebration and play for 58 "Littles" ranging in age from 8 to 17 and their mentor "Bigs."

In the 2004-05 season, Jones averaged 10.6 points per game, including a career high 31-point performance against the Orlando Magic. During his senior season at Oregon, he averaged 18.6 points and 5.4 rebounds per game as the Ducks went 26-9 and won their first outright PAC-10 conference title in 63 years. Jones was named to Basketball America's All-America Third Team, was an all-Pac-10 performer and Wooden Award finalist who led the Ducks to the NCAA Midwest Regional final.

Jones joins a growing list of prominent sports figures and entertainment celebrities who are spokespersons nationally and locally for the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, including John Salley (TV personality and retired NBA player), Kelly Perdew (*The Apprentice* season two winner), Josh Gracin (*American Idol* finalist), Mitch Barnhart (University of Kentucky athletic director), Mark Richt (University of Georgia head football coach), and Rosey Fletcher (Olympic snowboarder).

Details about the Oregon National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program are available at [www.oycp.com](http://www.oycp.com) or 541-317-9623.

**About the National Guard Youth Foundation:**

The National Guard Youth Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization formed to support the work of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program through public awareness, scholarships, higher education assistance, mentoring and job development programs for graduates. The Foundation is also working to expand the number of states and sites per state to accommodate growing demand for the program. The Honorary Board of Directors is co-chaired by Former President George H. W. Bush and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-La). For more information about the National Guard Youth Foundation, please visit their Web site at [www.ngyouthfoundation.org](http://www.ngyouthfoundation.org).

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