

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2016

City of Renton Contacts:

Preeti Shridhar, Deputy Public Affairs Administrator, 425-430-6569

Randy Matheson, Executive Directory Community Relations Renton School District, 425-204-2345

Seahawks Player Doug Baldwin partners with Mayor and School Superintendent to Build New Community Center

Vision: 17,000 square foot 'Family First Center' built near Cascade Elementary School

Renton, WA: Doug Baldwin from the Seattle Seahawks, Renton Mayor Denis Law, and Superintendent Dr. Art Jarvis from the Renton School District announced a partnership to build a state-of-the-art community center in the Cascade/Benson neighborhood. They presented their vision to the Renton School District Board who approved moving forward with the proposal, which in the future could include a lease of 17,000 square feet of land to build the Family First Community Center next to Cascade Elementary School. Their vision is to provide youth and families in the area with a community center that offers health, fitness, and recreational opportunities.

"This creative partnership we have formed is fueled by our collective vision of giving kids an opportunity to be great," said Mayor Denis Law. "This vision meets an urgent need, keeps our promise to our community, and provides for the safety, education and character development of the next generation." The goal of the Family First Community Center is to provide a whole host of programs including sports and recreation, health and wellness, childcare, and classes in technology, music and English as a second language. The center will support the growing needs of a diverse community in an area where 65% of the students qualify for reduced lunches and over 25% of the students are bilingual.

"Many of us have had the privilege of growing up in areas where recreation centers were essential components to youth and community development," said Dr. Art Jarvis. "And because of these advantages, we were able to thrive as children and have realized our dreams as adults. We must invest in our children's future and prepare them for a better tomorrow,"

Doug Baldwin has over seven years of business experience related to sports and recreation. He is joined by Nick Arnold, a professional with over 11 years of experience working with recreational and community centers, including Kids Discovery and YMCA. Baldwin originally approached Mayor Law and expressed his interest in providing a recreational facility in Renton to help meet the needs of underserved families. The Cascade/Benson area was an ideal option, with nearly a quarter of Renton's population, large number of the community living below the poverty line. The area has also been historically underserved.

The school board was very enthusiastic of the project and supported moving forward to develop more specifics on the proposal. They wholeheartedly agree with the need and strongly believe that the families in the Cascade/Benson community will greatly benefit from a community center of this nature. Renton City Council President Randy Corman also spoke to the board and expressed the city's commitment and excitement to partner with the Renton School District on this project.

Over the next several months, the Family First team will be working with the City of Renton, Renton School District, the Seattle Seahawks, and several community members to determine funding options, develop a design for the center, and establish programs.

“Community centers not only provide athletic and educational activities, they are the building blocks for character building opportunities,” said Doug Baldwin. “These opportunities are being denied to many of the youth of today especially in the Cascade/Benson area.