**Cities for Better Health Program as part of the Official State Visit Program of the King and Queen of Denmark**

Helsinki, March 4, 2025 – The cities of Turku and Kuopio, along with the Cities for Better Health collaboration, were part of the state visit program when their Majesties King Frederik X and Queen Mary of Denmark visited Merihaka.

As part of the state visit program, Their Majesties visited at the Merihaka civil defense center with the President of and Mrs. Innes-Stubb and started a floorball match between children from Turku and Kuopio. Additionally, the children presented drawings to the Queen and Mrs. Innes-Stubb emphasizing the importance of sport hobbies.

During the visit, the Royal couple also met with the leaders of Turku and Kuopio cities as part of the Cities for Better Health initiative.

Cities for Better Health initiative aims to build healthier urban environments for children and young people with local partners. This is essential because healthy and well-being people are crucial for societal resilience and comprehensive security.

The city of Turku has started to build a healthier growth environment and promote opportunities for children and young people to engage in physical activity. The city offers vouchers to every 7–19-year-old, which they can use to pay for the hobby of their choice.

Today Turku challenged the city of Kuopio to join this important work and share good practices with all other cities in Finland, Denmark, and around the world.

"The joy of sport and the sense of community and well-being that comes from it belongs to all children and young people. We are building Turku into a city where everyone has the opportunity to find their own community and their own way of moving. We want to challenge other cities in Finland, Denmark and around the world to do the same and share best practices that support a physical lifestyle for children," says **Minna Arve**, Mayor of Turku.

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This challenge is timely, as today the 4th of March, is World Obesity Day. Children's health and physical activity are key in preventing obesity and promoting public health. Together, we can create an environment where children can grow up healthy and active.

**Cities for Better Health**

The Cities for Better Health program encourage cities to create vibrant and safe environments where children can play and grow healthily.

In Turku, the program supports the use of the hobby voucher provided by the city in urban areas where families and children need support the most. The program also supports easy access hobby groups.

In addition to the city of Turku, the Cities for Better Health collaboration includes The Wellbeing services county of Southwest Finland (Varha) and the Paavo Nurmi Center

The Cities for Better Health partnership program, coordinated by Novo Nordisk, is a global network with over 50 cities involved. The collaboration addresses the barriers to healthier living in cities in a tailored way with residents and local partners.

The programs are based on scientific knowledge about the significant impact of the urban environment on people's health, especially the availability of healthy food and opportunities for physical activity. The topic is timely, as it is estimated that 70% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050.1

References:  
1 World Bank. Urban Development. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview  
Accessed on February 28, 2025.