In late 2008 and early 2009, Project PA, a collaboration between the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Food and Nutrition, and the Penn State University Department of Nutritional Sciences, collected “Promising Practices” submitted by Pennsylvania schools related to Coordinated School Health. Coordinated School Health is an initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which includes eight components which work together to address students’ health needs and contribute to improvements in health and learning. This manual includes descriptions of 51 of these “Promising Practices” that can be used as models for implementing activities to improve students’ health and wellness. For more information about Coordinated School Health, go to: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyYouth/CSHP/.

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Objective

Students and their families will learn to choose meals and activities that promote good health.

Category
Family/Community Involvement

Description

We have a healthful recipe display in many local community grocery stores. These stores display the recipes, as well as the ingredients for the recipes, in a convenient location for families. The recipes change weekly to ensure a variety of options.

Advice

Try to partner with as many local grocery stores as possible. Ensure that recipes are displayed in a highly visible location.

Evidence of Success

Comments: parents, students, staff, and community members have all contributed positive comments about how convenient this practice has been in our local grocery stores.
“Healthy Armstrong” Community Newsletter: Armstrong School District

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Objective
- Students and their families will learn how to become healthy and maintain their health.

Category
- Family/Community Involvement

Description
- We have a “Healthy Armstrong” community newsletter. This newsletter is developed by a group of community members who meet once every two months to discuss ways for our students and their families to live lifestyles that are more healthful. This community newsletter can be found in local hospitals and doctors’ offices, as well as on the district website. Inside this newsletter, you will find informative articles on nutrition topics, as well as healthful recipes and ways to get moving (even on a cold day). The newsletter also offers an opportunity for community businesses to post upcoming wellness events.

Advice
- Develop a supportive group of individuals to assist in publishing the newsletter.
- Our group of individuals that sit on the committee that supports the “Healthy Armstrong” newsletter consists of representatives from the local hospital, a pediatrics group, a health insurance provider, a wellness foundation, the county commissioners, and the school district.

Evidence of Success
- We have received positive feedback from community members, students, parents, doctors, etc. Everyone thinks it is a great way to provide wellness information to such a large group of people.
**Community Partnerships to Create Wellness Opportunities: Big Spring School District**

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**Objective**
- Increase activity and improve family health and wellness through a community partnership.

**Category**
- Family/Community Involvement

**Description**
- Through a community partnership, the Big Spring School District, Carlisle Area Health and Wellness Foundation, and Green Ridge (retirement) Village provide a before and after school wellness program for all elementary students in the Big Spring School District. The program has a split focus on physical activity and nutrition education. Students are physically active and complete a prescribed curriculum based on lifelong fitness activities and collaborative games. Part of the class time is also used to increase our students’ knowledge by providing nutrition education. These lessons are taught by certified physical educators and certified nutritionists.

- In addition, the students participate in a pedometer challenge titled “Step It Up.” This program challenges both the students and their families to be active as they log their daily and weekly steps. Students at each elementary building compete against other elementary schools within the district for the most number of steps taken. Bonuses are given if steps recorded are for family members. The goal is to get everyone active.

- Coupled with this, families are invited to Green Ridge Village one evening per month where they learn how to cook healthful meals from a fixed family budget. The guests dine at Green Ridge and then enjoy physical activity and use of the indoor pool. This has been beneficial to our community, as it provides families with an opportunity for fitness during the winter months.

**Advice**
- Utilize all available community resources.

**Evidence of Success**
- Throughout the before and after school wellness classes, data is collected on students’ fitness levels and their nutrition knowledge. It has been demonstrated that the program is effective by showing increases in students’ fitness levels and nutrition knowledge.
"The Chain Gang" – Monthly Saturday Morning Bike Rides: Elizabeth Lee Black School at the Barber National Institute

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Objectives
- Provide the following for the families of our students and families involved in community programs serving special needs children:
  - The opportunity to ride bikes, demonstrate improved physical fitness and demonstrate knowledge of bicycle safety.
  - A chance to address the nutrition information of the “Fruits and Veggies More Matters” program for healthful family eating and meal planning.
  - An opportunity to socialize with their peers.

Category
- Family/Community Involvement

Description
- The title of our program is “The Chain Gang—linking fitness, nutrition, and families together.” The family–community portion of the program takes place once a month on a Saturday morning. Students and their families from our school and community organizations or other schools serving students with special needs come to our gymnasium to ride adaptive bikes. They ride for 1/2 hour and then receive a short nutrition lesson, help prepare a healthful snack, and then eat it.
- Our program is manned by teachers and therapists from our school and volunteers from a local bank.
- It is funded through the “Highmark Healthy High Five School Challenge” grant that we received in September 2008. We purchased two specialty bikes that can accommodate children who need chest and waist straps, foot pedal straps, and steering guidance.
- The rest of the bikes that the children ride are property of our schools’ physical education program.

Advice
- Use your local resources.
- I emailed the local health department and received help with both the nutrition and the bicycle portions of our program.
- Volunteers are in every community. You just need to target their interests.
- Use your dedicated teachers, therapists and parents. There are always some willing to help with the physical work and to spread the news of new programs.

Evidence of Success
- Each month the number of participants has grown.

Continued on next page.
Evidence of Success, continued

- The expressions on the students’ faces while they participate in a typical physical activity with family and friends are a huge indicator of success.
- The parents’ comments and feedback have been very positive.
- We will ask parents/care–givers to fill out an evaluation form at the end of the program.
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Objective
- Help students in grades 7–12 make healthy choices in all areas of their lives — physical activity, nutrition, and positive health habits (related to drugs and alcohol).

Category
- Family/Community Involvement

Description
- Our school health council presented a health and wellness fair for all students. Over 20 vendors provided information to the students at the fair. Representatives of a local farm/farm market, food vendors, and local and national community service agencies are several examples of participants. All students and staff attended the fair by visiting during a class period. Many of the vendors offered free merchandise or sponsored drawings for prizes to entice the students to listen to their positive messages. Students and staff had positive comments regarding the fair.

Advice
- Our first health fair was scheduled for the entire day with one grade level attending the fair during each period. This was too lengthy. Our next fair is scheduled to run for three periods (about two and a half hours) and two grade levels will attend during each period.
- The more time spent planning the event, the more successful it will be.

Evidence of Success
- Students have shown their increased knowledge about food choices by choosing more fruits and vegetables with their lunches.
- Many students are choosing to join activities offered at the school that reinforce positive choices.
A “School Health Council” (SHC) team was created to support and enhance wellness activities and events in the school building, and to promote a healthy school environment. Team membership included the principal, physical education teacher, nurse, school nutrition team leader, home and school executive board member, and three interested parents. They collaborated with district office personnel to develop a calendar of wellness events in concert with the school calendar. They considered PANA events as well as School Nutrition Services activities and district events. They developed a budget, applied for grants, and met regularly as a team for open, two–way communication. They partnered with local businesses and used PANA resources whenever possible.

This team was enthusiastic, committed, well organized, and focused. They offered monthly activities or events to keep the visibility of wellness high and to sustain engagement. Membership crossed curriculum areas and involved administrators, teachers, students, and parents, which complemented the district’s “Family Engagement” journey to further engage families and the community in ways that translate into increased student achievement.

Working in collaboration with the principal, related curricular area teachers, and the home and school office allowed for support and communication. This ensured sustainability as part of an existing structure within the building.

Keeping accurate records of expenses, resources needed, participation numbers, etc. provided data for reports as well as for future planning.

Collaborating with district wellness staff and policies provided avenues for support and media coverage.

Share your practices and your model with other school buildings in the district to promote wellness.

Participation rate increased this year in events that were offered last year.

There has been strong support from both parents and students.
FIT (Families in Training) events are a core component of the Owen J. Roberts Wellness Council programming, “Fit for Life.” FIT events have been a part of our district for many years. When the teacher in charge of the program retired, the wellness council morphed the monthly activity–themed events into four major community events that include a holistic health approach. Health and physical education departments are instrumental in planning and offering these events that include community businesses and non–profits who offer products or services in the health field.

By engaging our audience in an opportunity for family play, we elicit participation that a health fair alone may not draw, giving us the opportunity to educate as well as engage. Events have included:

- The Warwick County Park “Fun Run and Romp in the Woods”
- The High School “Fit-a-Palooza”
- “Swim & Gym” at the YMCA
- “FIT Day”
- “FIT Night”

We have included tangible, exercise–oriented incentives (prizes) through a grant from the Pottstown Area Health Foundation. This year we will award a Wii Fit System to the school bringing the most attendance to our events. Individual schools participate in friendly competition among themselves to win these prizes.

Advice

We have learned that incentives help to draw people out, but we still do not get the quantities of participants that we hope for. Interestingly, events sponsored by individual school communities are drawing up to five times the numbers.

It is challenging to market the events. Family communication can still be a bit problematic with our important paperless communication initiatives.

It is also a challenge to find facilities (such as gym space). We are indebted to many community partners who offer their resources (land, facilities, etc.) at a free or reduced rate.

Evidence of Success

Feedback at PTA and parent meetings indicates that families look forward to these events. Being able to offer all events and raffles for free has generated goodwill for our cause.

Contact Information

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Objective

To increase the opportunity for physical activity, increase knowledge of physical activity options, increase knowledge of and exposure to area resources, and increase knowledge of good nutrition.
“Fit–Family” is the annual Pfaff Elementary after school fitness program. This program is fitness–based and focuses on enhancing the five health related fitness components: muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, and body composition.

This program is for all students, parents, teachers, siblings, and staff that have an interest in improving their health and fitness.

“Fit–Family” runs two or three days per month, beginning at 3:35 pm, and ends promptly at 4:45 pm. Each day’s focus varies, but a fitness and activity base is maintained. The format consists of the following:

- 10–15 minute warm–up
- 40–50 minutes of varying content of fitness, sports, and physical challenges
- 10–15 minutes with a focus on flexibility and cooling down

There is a variety of intensity levels. Students at all fitness levels are welcomed, accommodated, and encouraged to participate.

Establish a clear process to monitor which students stay after school and how they will be transported home. Change the activities weekly to keep interest high and to expose students to a variety of activities.

The program has been running for four years, and there are still new families and students that join. Students and families have also been consistently attending for the past four years. Average attendance is 40 people, but on some days attendance is as high as 60, and the highest ever was 115.
Description
This year, we hope to start our plants indoors and then transfer them to our outside gardens. Residents who are not allowed outside of the facility will be able to care for the plants during the inside phase. Then, other residents will move the seedlings to the outside gardens. We are also going to add herbs to our dining room planters so we can utilize them year-round.

Our outside gardens presently consist of a variety of herbs and vegetables. Our food service staff freeze-dries the herbs and vegetables for year-round enjoyment. We will enlarge our gardens this year to allow for an increase in vegetables. We will add a pumpkin and gourd patch, along with watermelons, honeydews, and cantaloupes. We also hope to start some fruit trees, and, if there is enough time, we may add a corn field.

If we can secure the necessary resources and funds for a hot house, we also plan to grow crops year-round.

Advice
The program has been rewarding to both residents and staff, but it takes a lot of resources and volunteers to continue the success.

Evidence of Success
- Improvements in residents’ behavior, life skills, and self-esteem.
- Decreased food costs during summer months
- Improved food quality
- Improved variety of foods
“Wellness Words of Wisdom” in the Morning Announcements: Gettysburg Area School District

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**Objective**
- Provide weekly health and nutrition information in an entertaining and informative format for the entire school.

**Category**
- Health Education

**Description**
- Our school makes the morning announcements on our in-house television station, and students run the cameras and read the announcements. Every Wednesday, I don my white nurse’s cap and white lab coat, and I present the Wednesday “Wellness Words of Wisdom” with the students. I give short “info-mercials” on subjects such as nutrition (e.g., go for colors of the rainbow when choosing vegetables, eating breakfast, healthful snacks) and overall health in topics such as sleep, safety (wearing helmets, using seat belts), using sunscreen, drinking water, and hand washing. The students help me present the message, and we use props, act out some parts, and sometimes get a little silly, but we are getting the message across.

**Advice**
- Search the internet to find information and use seasonal topics, such as why turkey makes you tired (for Thanksgiving), or use a skeleton at Halloween and talk about bones.

**Evidence of Success**
- Students have responded well to this and frequently stop in my office on Tuesday to ask what the Wednesday “Wellness Words of Wisdom” are going to be about for the next day.

- On Wednesdays students in the hall will tell me what they thought was funny/weird/interesting about that morning’s announcement.
This project is done in sixth-grade health class during a fitness and nutrition unit. The students are taught all aspects of the F.I.T.T. (frequency, intensity, time, type) principle. Frequency relates to how often a person exercises; intensity is the exertion level that is exhibited during exercise; time is the duration of the exercise; and type is the participant’s choice of exercise.

The students use their personal fitness scores from a fitness assessment conducted in the months prior to the project. Students input these scores into Excel spreadsheets along with averages for gender and grade level. They also input scores from the national averages of the Fitness Gram (the test we use for our fitness assessments). The final step for the students is to graph their personal scores and see the comparison of their scores to the Keith Valley averages, male and female respectively, and Fitness Gram norms.

The technology component provides stimulating data for the students.

The students complete two writing components. They are required to do a written analysis of their comparison graphs, and a recommendation for improvement or maintenance of their current fitness levels.

The recommendation portion is a student–designed personal fitness plan. The students must use the F.I.T.T. formula to write personal fitness plans to maintain or improve their current fitness levels. These plans should display variety in selected activities: cardiovascular training, strength training with age-appropriate weights, and flexibility exercises.

The writing component requires the students to reflect on this data when they create their personal fitness plans and determine the goals they hope to attain. This interdisciplinary approach to learning creates a personal, meaningful, and enjoyable approach to maintaining or improving physical fitness.

Continued on next page.
**Advice**

- Ensure that record keeping of fitness scores maintains the privacy of the students. We use student I.D. numbers, which allow the students to view their scores. There is nothing else that would identify them on the records.

- The project should be broken down into parts to make it a more manageable task for the students and for the teacher. If possible, try to have a technology teacher, or someone else familiar with computer spreadsheets, to assist in the data input and graphing process. Also, a language arts teacher’s assistance would be helpful during the writing, analysis, and recommendation phase.

**Evidence of Success**

- We have received positive feedback from our students. They enjoyed creating their fitness plans, and they were eager to see if they could execute their tailored plans.
“Wellness Workshop” for Seventh Graders: Laurel School District

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Objectives
- Students will become more knowledgeable about ways to maintain a healthy body.
- Students will become active participants in lifelong decisions that will affect their health.
- Students will be able to articulate an increase in knowledge regarding health issues.
- Students will demonstrate healthy lifestyles by participating in classroom activities that can be replicated at home.
- Students will be equipped with the tools needed to maintain health throughout their lives.

Category
- Health Education

Description
- “Wellness Workshop” was designed to promote healthy behaviors in school age children. It is a class offered only to seventh grade. It covers topics related to health and wellness in an interactive, fun, yet educational manner. Topics include but are not limited to: fitness, nutrition, hygiene, puberty (anatomy and physiological changes), preventative care (breast self-examination and testicular self-examination), body piercing and tattooing, tanning bed dangers, abstinence, common colds, sore throats, sexually-transmitted diseases, drugs, alcohol, and diseases associated with choices made while youthful, such as diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, hypertension, cancer, and heart disease.
- This is an interactive class that incorporates moving and activity into almost every lesson. Research has proven that if the brain is stimulated learning occurs more easily.

Advice
- It takes time, and you must be flexible in your lessons. The teacher must be knowledgeable about the lessons because the students have many questions. This may be the first time some of this information has been presented to them. One also must act as a role model for it to be most effective.

Evidence of Success
- Students return to me years later to tell me what they did to keep themselves healthy, or to tell me about a decision they made based on what they learned.
Adagio Health’s “Power–Up” Program instructors teach the students on a weekly basis about the importance of good nutrition and physical activity. They provide monthly newsletters to parents, school assemblies for students, and are part of the district website as an outreach to parents and caregivers for nutrition advice.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is a catalyst in changing the mindset of parents and combating childhood obesity. A fresh fruit or vegetable is offered to each student at 10:30 every morning of the school year.

Of our enrollment of 754, 345 fall within the state guidelines of being at risk for being overweight or obese. This is 44% of our student body. This grant provides our students with the opportunity to sample a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and promote healthful eating.

These programs empower our students with knowledge and the proper eating behaviors to make healthful choices for a lifetime. We support PANA philosophy and activities. Our Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) and our Health and Wellness Committee are also supportive.

Elicit support from the staff, administration, and your school’s PTA. The PTA can provide volunteers to deliver the daily snacks. Our food service manager—coordinator has done an excellent job in providing a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from reliable, local vendors.

The students completed a pre-test in December and a post–test at the end of the programs in May. The tests included five questions related to physical activity and nutrition. Ninety–one percent of students answered the questions correctly in May (post–test) compared to 83% in December (pre–test.).
Evidence of Success, continued

- The students are absorbing the information. They are talking about the snacks with their peers at lunch and with parents at the dinner table. Students ask their parents to buy fresh fruits and vegetables and to substitute them for junk foods.

- Word is getting out about the success of our programs, and other school districts are requesting information about them.

- Parents are going online to check out the information on the Adagio Health “Power–Up” web site, and they are responding to our monthly newsletters.

- Parents volunteer to help with the program on a daily basis.
“Growing Our Future” Program Includes School Gardens and Farm Tours: Owen J. Roberts School District

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**Objective**
The Owen J. Roberts Healthy School Healthy Farms: “Growing Our Future” program addresses the emerging epidemic of diet-related diseases by introducing healthful foods and eating habits. This is accomplished through schoolyard gardens, farm tours, food sampling, hands–on cooking, and nutrition education. Additionally, the program fosters relationships with farmers, introduces the value of locally produced foods, and builds community. The program strives to:

- Increase the student and parent connection to food sources through growing and harvesting of foods in educational outdoor gardens and through visits to working farms;
- Increase the consumption of nutritious food by teaching children and parents how to make better food choices;
- Increase student and parent awareness and value of locally grown food and enlist the support of parents to help increase children’s consumption of fresh local products;
- Support Pennsylvania’s agricultural landscape and economy by teaching students and parents agricultural and natural resource stewardship, by offering access to local foods, and by teaching how to cook with local foods; and
- Build community and sense of place in the community through various opportunities to meet local farmers and chefs and to participate in a community Farm Market event to help increase children’s consumption of fresh local products.

**Category**
- Health Education

**Description**
This program was piloted in one school, East Vincent Elementary School (EVE), beginning with an outdoor educational garden. The pilot program at EVE expanded to nutrition education and guided discovery that supports Pennsylvania Standards for Kindergarten Education. EVE Kindergarten teachers received a grant to provide whole food snacks (foods that are grown). Students learn about “healthy choices” in a variety of ways. The program has now expanded through the PA Department of Agriculture Healthy Farms, Healthy Schools Grant to include all district kindergarten students in five elementary schools.

Individual kindergarten classrooms use indoor and outdoor gardens, nutrition lessons, cooking demonstrations, food tastings, farm visits, farmer talks, and a culminating hands–on Farm Day to integrate farm/food/health relationships into the curriculum. Topics include family–school–community partnerships; health, safety, and physical education; reading, writing, speaking, and listening; science and technology; and environment and ecology. Big books and other resources help teachers coordinate lessons. “Growing Vegetable Soup”, “Eating the Alphabet,” and “Diary of a Worm” are among the books used.

Continued on next page.
Kindergarten students cultivate fresh vegetables, and they taste foods they may not have otherwise tried. A local farmer visits each school to plant pea sprouts that the students harvest and eat. Lessons focus on whole food snacks as much as possible. In the 2008–09 school year, Owen J. Roberts kindergarten students experience local foods in many ways, and they are encouraged to make intelligent food choice. They focus on five behavior outcomes:

- Eat a variety of foods;
- Eat more fruits, vegetables and grains;
- Eat locally produced foods more often;
- Become comfortable with basic food preparation and safety; and
- Be physically active.

Kindergarten teachers and partners use fun and behavior-focused nutrition education strategies to increase acceptance and preference for healthful and local foods. Educational trips for parents and students to local farms include the Milky Way Farm. Maysie’s Farm and Conservation Center also supports the program. Kindergarten Farm Day, a hands-on educational field trip in May that is planned and provided by high school agriculture students, provides:

- Opportunities for students to apply what they have learned about the grain chain;
- An opportunity to become “farmer for a day” and take products to market;
- Hands-on exposure to farm animals, local foods and butter-making; and
- An interactive concert.

Advice

Food allergies present challenges with experimental food programs. We work to be as inclusive as possible, but not every child can participate in every activity.

It is expensive to provide healthful snacks — at least one dollar per day per student. Delivery fees compound the expense.

It is ambitious to provide this program district-wide in 16 classrooms and 5 schools. The program could not succeed without volunteers and a dedicated grant manager.

It is a concern that students are not motivated to continue the habits they adopt in kindergarten. Our next step is to introduce a nutrition program, “There is a Rainbow on My Plate,” to district second graders.

Evidence of Success

At first, teachers were extremely cautious to adopt the program due to so many demands and priorities that already seem overwhelming. After one year, the results, including parent/student feedback, were so positive that every teacher embraced the program. Many teachers noted behavior changes in their students when provided with healthful snacks.

The kindergartners are easily motivated to learn how to be healthy.

Students react to food offerings in the classroom differently than they may at home. They look forward to trying new things.

Students ask their caretakers to provide the healthful snacks they sample in the classroom. Many families would never have tried hummus, carrot cookies, or even vegetable soup. Parents ask for and use the recipes used in school.
Using the framework of the Caring Habits program (see caringhabits.org), monthly health promotion activities are provided to all junior high students. Utilizing the expertise of community resource persons, lessons include topics such as nutrition, physical activity, safety, stress management, disability awareness, smoking, volunteerism, conflict resolution, environmental health, and bullying prevention.

This program has provided our staff with a flexible framework for focusing on a wide variety of health education topics. It has introduced our students to community resources that are of benefit to them and their families. Our students look forward to the interactive activities that have been developed through a cross-curricular approach to health education.

Our pre/post student surveys indicated positive changes in health attitudes and behaviors due to the activities/lessons. Teachers also reported improved student health-related behaviors.


**Title:** Kindergarten Initiative

**Description:**

- Nutrition and agriculture education — Teachers are trained and given resources to teach a yearlong program that is integrated into their regular curricula.
- Locally grown snacks are provided two times per week to all students.
- Two to three times per year students and their parents participate in trips to a farm to develop a relationship with the farmer and to learn about the source of food.
- Programs for parents are held at least every other month. Activities include cooking in the classroom, distribution of parent newsletters, and a monthly kindergarten farm store (which allows parents to purchase locally grown produce directly from their children’s classrooms).

The Food Trust piloted this program five years ago in four schools in Philadelphia. Today there are 56 schools across the state of Pennsylvania (37 in the Philadelphia area) doing the program through the Healthy Farms Healthy Schools funding.

We were concerned with the wellness of small children and local farms. Through research we know that children do not eat enough fruits and vegetables, and these habits contribute to diet–related diseases as well as malnourishment. Research shows that children should learn about and develop healthy habits early in life when they are developing food preferences. We hope to add a physical education aspect to the program by January 2009.

**Advice**

The most challenging aspect is putting together the locally grown snack infrastructure. Farmers, a caterer, and a distribution system are necessary. Think this through before starting your program.

**Evidence of Success**

This program has become sustainable through funding by the PA Department of Agriculture, Healthy Farms Healthy Schools Act that was signed into law in 2006. We have published a tool kit for schools that are interested in doing the program. A formal evaluation of the program has been done with Temple University. There is a full report at www.thefoodtrust.org.
“Healthy Times” Student Newspaper: Upper Darby School District

Contact Information
Contact Person: Nancy Erickson
Contact Person’s Title: School Nurse
Email: nerickson@upperdarbysd.org
Contact Person’s Phone Number: (610) 853–4530 | FAX: (610) 853–6678

Objectives
- Promote health, fitness, nutrition, and safety in the school community.
- Empower students to identify and address the health issues relevant to their school and community.

Category
- Health Education

Description
- “Healthy Times” newspapers are written and illustrated by primary school students. These publications are geared to promote health, fitness, nutrition, and safety in the school community. The newspapers enable participating students to sharpen their writing, interviewing, and research skills. They provide the school community with a relevant resource for reading enrichment. By empowering youth to research and report on the health issues that interest and concern them, this youth–written newspaper seeks to make positive changes in the school culture and improve the health–related knowledge of students and their families.

- “Healthy Times,” published by more than 140 students in 13 schools, is built on an initiative that began at Hillcrest Elementary School in Upper Darby, PA, in 2003. Marian Uhlman (a former Philadelphia Inquirer staff writer who specialized in health issues and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting) and Susan Spencer, who was then a second grade teacher, combined their experiences in the newsroom and classroom to develop the newspaper. The newspaper adheres to journalistic standards and is relevant to children, their families, and school staff, while supporting both literacy and good health.

Advice
- Just get started.
- Encourage your students to think “out of the box” while guiding them through the experience.
- Listen.
- Keep an open mind.

Evidence of Success
- I used the National Health Education Standards (www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHER/standards/1.htm) to assess the quality of health information in the “Healthy Times” newspaper. I determined how many of the eight standards were addressed by each school’s editions of the newspaper during the year. The findings indicate that of the ten schools, six addressed all eight standards, three addressed seven standards, and one addressed five standards in its single, two–page issue.

Continued on next page.
Evidence of Success, continued

- Surveys indicate that most students who read the paper enjoy it, and most teachers have discussed the newspaper’s content in the classroom.

- Most parents who read their school’s paper have reported that it had a positive impact on their children.
The teachers track their daily steps using pedometers while attempting to get a minimum of the recommended 10,000 steps a day. The activity employs a competition to see which team can take the most steps in a 12-week period.

The local community YMCA allows the teachers to engage in a minimum of two days per week of after-school activity. The kickboxing/aerobic instructor comes to the local elementary buildings to hold a 45-minute aerobic session for the teachers.

Everyone wants to live a healthier lifestyle. You just need to provide convenient and timely ways to engage your staff.

The number of participants is increasing and the comments are overwhelmingly positive.

At the beginning of the step challenge some of the teachers were surprised to realize how few daily steps they were taking. They have found ways to increase those numbers and walk their way to a more positive day.
Description

My program is entitled “No Staff Left on Their Behind.”

It is a 12–week wellness challenge designed to get the staff exercising and eating well so that they may maintain their weight or lose a few pounds. Staff members who want to participate may sign up through the physical education teacher who runs the program. Participants then form teams of five to six members, or the teacher assigns them to teams.

A big poster showing team standings is hung in the faculty room. Each team decides on a team name, such as “The Fabulous Four,” “Too Much Junk in Our Trunk,” etc. and then submits a silly picture that is glued to the poster board to represent their team.

The teacher in charge hands out a packet to each team member. Each packet includes exercise and nutrition tips, articles on water consumption, a MyPyramid worksheet from MyPyramid.gov, as well as weekly logs to turn in to the team captains. The teacher serves to motivate the teams each week by giving prizes such as granola bars, notepads, picture frames, bright shoelaces, etc. The teacher also presents participants with some challenges such as do one different aerobic exercise this week, eat three different colored vegetables today, write down something to be thankful for every day this week, etc. Each staff member donates five dollars to a fund that is used to purchase the various prizes.

There are three categories for which they earn points: exercise, nutrition and water consumption. For exercise they must do at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise four times per week to earn all of their points. For nutrition they have to be their own judge and eat well at least six days per week (nutrition is discussed before the program). For water consumption they must drink six or more eight–ounce glasses of water per day at least six days of the week.

Each team has a team captain that tallies the team points weekly and hands them in. Team points are tallied as follows: if your whole team received all of their exercise points, then the team receives 50 points. If only half got the points, then the team receives only 25 points, and if less than half earns points, the score is zero in that category. The points are tallied like this for each of the three categories.

Continued on next page.
Description, continued

At the beginning of the program each individual sets a weight goal (e.g., to lose a certain number of pounds or just to maintain their weight). Additional points are awarded for achieving your goal by the end of the program.

Advice

Be sure to set a due date each week to help the teachers remember to turn in the paperwork. The team captains can also email the team results to the teacher running the program instead of using the paper copy.

Evidence of Success

Each year the staff asks when we are going to start the program. Usually about 25–30 staff members participate. It is awesome to see staff members walking together after school or bringing healthier alternatives to lunch. They definitely strive to use healthy habits during this program.
The Physical Education staff introduced a new step program to target teachers and increase their activity at school. “Biggest Stepper” is a teacher incentive program to stimulate physical activity among teachers during the school day.

Our Principal, Chris Menzel, supplied pedometers for all staff members. The physical education department created a step chart for all staff members to record their steps each school day for two weeks. The physical education staff also suggested ways for teachers to increase their personal steps (park farther away from the building, network with other teachers on the other side of the building, use a stair case that is farther away, create a walking circuit).

Teachers who become the Biggest Steppers are awarded healthful prizes selected especially for them.

We intend to run this program several times throughout the year (fall, spring, and pre/post holiday).

Advice
- It works well as a morale-booster and for networking with others.

Evidence of Success
- The feedback from the teachers has been overwhelmingly positive. Everyone lets us know that they are walking or jogging together more often than before the program. Everyone is excited about the activity and the prizes. We have a high rate of participation. Many people are reaching the goal of 10,000 steps a day.
The building staff have been offered an after school fitness class. The class is taught by a volunteer, and it is held every Tuesday and Thursday after school. There is a core group of staff members who consistently attend the class. The activities taught include kickboxing, dance aerobics, weight lifting, spinning, and yoga. The class also contains a flexibility and core strength component.

Advice

When implementing a faculty fitness class, it is best to start the workouts at a beginner level. This is imperative to ensure that people do not become discouraged. Participants tend to feel uncomfortable at first; therefore, it is important to make the workouts realistic and fun so that participants continue to return. As the class progresses so will the overall level of fitness, and appropriate changes must be implemented.

It is important to provide several options in accordance with varying fitness levels to encourage newcomers to join.

Initial use of sign–up sheets is helpful because the response can be overwhelming. The mailroom is a great place for staff members to sign up because it is accessible to everyone. As time progresses, a group of “regulars” tends to participate, and the need for sign–up sheets diminishes. When you reach this point, email can be used as the source of communication with the participants.

Evidence of Success

There has been positive feedback from the staff members that participate in the class. Regular attendance by several staff members indicates that they are enjoying the classes and recognizing changes in their levels of fitness. Participants have formed a sense of camaraderie, and they encourage other staff members to attend.

Participants have reported that they feel more energetic because of the class. Some participants have also noted that they are feeling less sore from working out. Others have purchased their own weighted body bars and yoga mats.

Contact Information

Contact Person: Erika Lee
Contact Person’s Title: Health and Physical Education Teacher
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Contact Person’s Phone Number: (267) 992–8241

Objectives

Promote health and exercise habits among the Keith Valley Middle School staff.

Advocate for Health and Physical Education by introducing activities similar to those taught to the students.

Promote staff morale.

Create a setting that allows students to observe staff members as positive role models.

Category

Health Promotion for Staff

Description

The building staff have been offered an after school fitness class. The class is taught by a volunteer, and it is held every Tuesday and Thursday after school. There is a core group of staff members who consistently attend the class. The activities taught include kickboxing, dance aerobics, weight lifting, spinning, and yoga. The class also contains a flexibility and core strength component.

Advice

When implementing a faculty fitness class, it is best to start the workouts at a beginner level. This is imperative to ensure that people do not become discouraged. Participants tend to feel uncomfortable at first; therefore, it is important to make the workouts realistic and fun so that participants continue to return. As the class progresses so will the overall level of fitness, and appropriate changes must be implemented.

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Evidence of Success

There has been positive feedback from the staff members that participate in the class. Regular attendance by several staff members indicates that they are enjoying the classes and recognizing changes in their levels of fitness. Participants have formed a sense of camaraderie, and they encourage other staff members to attend.

Participants have reported that they feel more energetic because of the class. Some participants have also noted that they are feeling less sore from working out. Others have purchased their own weighted body bars and yoga mats.
The MTSD Staff Wellness Program was started in 2000 with a vision to provide a variety of opportunities to raise awareness of staff wellness and to provide strategies to help employees maintain and/or improve their own personal level of health and well-being. Our school board identified wellness as a major goal for staff and students, and it has been supportive of our efforts through the years.

Over the last eight years, we have developed a model that fits our needs. MTSD has 1,100 employees. Our 12 building-level wellness representatives plan, promote, and evaluate the building-level and district programs that we offer based on yearly surveys of our staff. We meet quarterly to discuss what each school is doing, share ideas of what is working and what isn’t, and plan for district-level events.

In addition, data we have compiled drives the educational component and fitness campaigns. We work closely with our Highmark offerings and with local fitness centers. Hamot Medical Center provides our screenings, usually on an in-service day in October. Various community health organizations provide speakers that meet the identified needs.

Our school-based fitness centers are open for staff use daily after school. Some schools provide aerobic or walking clubs on site to help staff fit regular physical activity into their daily routines.

Assessment is based on the number of staff who participate in our programs as well as the anecdotal stories shared from those whose lives have been influenced in a significant manner.

We have used a number of different incentives to motivate people to become involved. We are still looking at ways to improve this aspect of the program.

Continued on next page.
Description, continued

Our next challenge is to work with our health care provider and the various contracted employee groups to see if we can provide monetary reimbursement for those staff who take greater responsibility for wellness behaviors and preventative health screenings. This can lower our health care premiums and, we hope, decrease the number of sick days taken each year.

Advice

- Start simple.
- Involve people who are committed to wellness and want to lead others.
- Share the load.
- Be open to offering a variety of fitness and nutrition programs.
- Learn from programs in similar work environments.
- Tap into local resources.
- Provide incentives that motivate.
- Publicize participation and success stories.
- Listen to your employees and meet the needs that are expressed.
- Learn from mistakes.
- Tweak as you go.
- Thank leaders for their persistence and patience. Keep the vision of wellness in the forefront.

Evidence of Success

- The biggest change I can attest to is that the number of smokers has greatly decreased.
- The number of staff members who participate in the building–level programs we offer is increasing.
- The number of staff members who are involved with some type of physical activity has increased.
- There is also more awareness of healthy eating options. These staff improvements have also helped our school breakfast and lunch program make some needed changes.
- Our goal is to provide healthy adult role models for all students grades K–12. That is finally starting to happen.
We started a game called “The Biggest Winners Club.” Anyone willing to work on personal wellness is a winner. This game is very similar to “The Biggest Loser” on television but with many variations to fit the MVSD population. The initial game started with members of the faculty, staff, and administration forming three–person teams and encouraging each other toward better nutrition, exercise and weight loss. Teams became very creative in these areas. Both the high school staff and the elementary school staff became involved during the school year. It was required that each person pay ten dollars to be in the game, and weekly weigh–ins/nurse consultations were conducted. The game concluded with the greatest percentile loss being calculated for individuals and teams. Variations of this game then continued in the spring and during the summer break.

There was a winning team and a winning individual. Twenty–five percent of the money went to the biggest winner and 75 percent went to the winning team. As a reward to all participants, the “Club” was featured on Good Morning PA hosted by WNEP channel 16.

Be creative and positive about health. People want to feel better about themselves. Try to create many types of programs that fit into all the unique lifestyles. It is important to make people feel hopeful that they can become healthier.

Prior to the summer there were over 400 pounds lost.

People continue to ask about the future of the program. We had individuals who experienced significant weight loss that they maintained as they permanently changed their habits. People became very interested in wellness and are positive about the changes that have occurred in their lives and their friends’ lives.
Faculty Model Healthy Lifestyle for Students: Owen J. Roberts School District

Contact Information
Contact Person: Jo-an Rechtin
Contact Person’s Title: Wellness Coordinator
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Contact Person’s Phone Number: (610) 469–5697

Objectives
- To motivate all district staff members to set personal physical activity goals.
- To generate student/community awareness that the staff models healthy behavior.

Category
Health Promotion for Staff

Description
C25K is an acronym for Couch to 5K — a gentle, incremental introduction to running. 10KADAY short messages the concept of walking 10,000 steps per day. Part of the appeal of the program is the use of hip, text message–inspired labeling. This program is a partnership of Owen J. Roberts Human Resources Department, Independence Blue Cross, the Owen J. Roberts Wellness Council and other community partners.

All staff received a “teaser” email prior to winter holidays explaining that they would have a “sweetened” opportunity to move more in the New Year in support of each individual’s quest to live their best life. The program was then introduced with another email, C25K 10KADAY Q&A, detailing how to sign up, what the incentives were, online resources, and log sheets to track progress. Human Resources tapped into the employee benefits budget to offer prizes for a weekly raffle including iPods and exercise equipment. The district insurance carrier donated incentives and tickets to a major sporting event. The Wellness Council provided pedometers, C25K car magnets, and other incentives through a grant.

Advice
A local running supplies store volunteered to help with email incentives offering discounts and professional help with shoe fittings. The store also volunteered to help establish an Owen J. Roberts 5K race. We researched many other workplace walking programs for evidence–based ideas.

Evidence of Success
- Although the nine–week program was still in progress at the time of this submission, the response was incredible. Administrators fearlessly joined the program. About one–third of the district staff pledged to participate. We allowed people to join at any point in the nine weeks; however, a grand prize raffle was created for those who participated and met their goals (and minimum program goals) for the entire nine–week period.
- Students noticed teachers wearing pedometers and would inquire about the process.
- Staff members were publicly recognized for their achievements via announcements, www.OJRFitforLife.com, and email messages.
A new health and wellness council was started in each of the schools in our district. The high school council created a way to promote fitness among the teachers and staff in our building. The plan was publicized initially at faculty meetings, and later through email and in the morning announcements. All participants were given tee shirts to wear that also promoted the challenge. Participants paid $25.00 to buy into the program. Everyone would participate in a weekly weigh in on Wednesdays. Weight gain or forgetting to weigh in resulted in additional $2.00 charges. Participants were weighed in the nurse’s office and the percentage calculations were done by the Math Department. A blog site was set up by our athletic trainer. All participants received their weight loss percentages in emails, and they were given the results of their colleagues. Again, only highest percent of weight loss was disclosed, not actual pounds. The challenge started the first week in January and ended in May. The winner with the highest percent of weight lost received $200. The second place winner received $150, and third place won $75. Additional funds collected from entrance fees or penalties were donated to the Henderson Faculty Scholarship Fund.

Advice
- Advertise the program as much as possible before implementing it.
- Once people have agreed to do the challenge, there needs to be some incentive, such as a monetary reward for the most weight lost. Many people like to compete against each other, particularly the men. We post the results weekly so that everyone can see who is “winning.” That makes it more fun.
- We have also blogged the results, and offered healthy tips for everyone in our building on how to lose weight, even if they are not participating in the challenge.

Evidence of Success
- This challenge has been effective because people have lost weight, and have managed to keep the weight off since we started this over three years ago.
- People continue to come in and weigh themselves periodically even though they are not participating this year. Most individuals who did the challenge are now intent on keeping the weight off, and they either have adopted an exercise regimen or are eating a more healthful diet.
We conduct a faculty physical activity competition using pedometers. The faculty and staff are issued pedometers, and they log the steps they take from sign–in to sign–out time at school. Every week the step leaders for each building are announced. At the end of each nine weeks a first, second, and third place winner is announced at each building. The winners are rewarded with gift certificates for various services at a local fitness facility. The students are aware of the competition, and they learn from the examples set by their teachers who enjoy the competition’s physical activity.

Make sure you secure enough pedometers for all faculty and staff.

Make sure to “level the playing field” as much as possible with rules and regulations for the competition.

It is still too early to tell, but a few students wear their own pedometers, and one teacher told me that she is now “addicted” to her pedometer.
In the 2002–2003 school year, the state of Pennsylvania instituted new immunization requirements for kindergarten and seventh grade students. Beginning with that school year, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) has provided catch-up immunization clinics to students who need help in securing the state mandated vaccines. C. A. Huston Middle School in Burrell School District has offered vaccines to students each year since that initial project. Activities leading toward student vaccination included:

- Researching vaccine preventable illnesses, including complications of the illnesses as well as vaccine side effects and contraindications;
- Collaboration between the school physician and PADOH;
- Obtaining school board permission to run immunization clinics;
- Evaluating immunization status of enrolled students, and then notifying families of deficits;
- Sending information and permission forms to families;
- Explaining procedures to participating students prior to clinic dates and encouraging questions;
- Presenting immunization information to health classes;
- Scheduling vaccine clinics with the PADOH, including ordering, securing, storing and administering vaccine;
- Providing documentation to families of updated vaccines; and
- Submitting a final report to PADOH.

The PADOH offers assistance to schools on their website, www.health.state.pa.us/immunizations. The website has all the steps outlined and these steps can be adjusted to meet the needs of different populations.

Advice

Considering the time and energy certified school nurses already put forth in maintaining student immunization records, offering an immunization clinic is one additional resource available for meeting state mandated immunization requirements.

Continued on next page.
Advice, continued

This project is a great opportunity to develop a professional network outside of one school or school district. Nurses at the local health department are very helpful, as are the contacts in Harrisburg.

Evidence of Success

Each year several students participate in the immunization clinics. Over the years, many families thank the school and PADOH for offering the program. Not only does the project provide necessary immunizations to children, but it also allows the opportunity for positive interactions between school and home.

Thirty–three doses of hepatitis B vaccine were administered in the first year of participation. As the years passed, different vaccines have been offered by the PADOH, depending on public health needs. So far this year, I have over 120 permission forms for a free influenza clinic in the fall (2008).
Middle school students are eligible to take CPR as an elective course for half of the school year. The course is taught by the school nurse in a small group setting. Students are certified and are competent in CPR under the American Heart Association Heartsaver, CPR in-schools program. They are also prepared to use the AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) in the event of a cardiac related emergency.

First Aid skills are also taught after students demonstrate competency at administering CPR.

I have found that middle school students are able to learn and demonstrate these skills, which could prove to be life saving. They are eager to learn the skills, and they are not only physically, but emotionally capable. Studies show that students this age can perform CPR and be adequately prepared in the event that a cardiac arrest should occur while they are nearby.

Thankfully, we have not had an event in our school where someone has required CPR. However, our parents are enthusiastic about the prospect of their children becoming CPR/AED/First Aid certified, because many students this age are starting to babysit.
ABCDiet Program for Youth Obesity Prevention:
University of Pittsburgh

Contact Information
Contact Person: Lisa Bernardo
Contact Person’s Title: Associate Professor
Email: lbe100@pitt.edu
Contact Person’s Phone Number: (412) 624–7637 | FAX: (412) 383–7293

Objectives
- Educate school nurses about youth obesity prevention.
- Assist school nurses in implementing the ABCDiet Program in their schools.
- Evaluate the Program’s outcomes.

Category
- Health Services

Description
- We provide continuing education training for school nurses on the current science of youth obesity prevention. We teach the school nurses how to implement the ABCDiet program in their schools. The nurses’ education and ABCDiet Program are provided free of charge through a Health Resources and Services Administration training grant.

- ABCDiet is an evidence–based program that incorporates nutrition and physical activity into its implementation. The program includes diet awareness, physical activity progress (pedometer calculation), and self–assessments.

- After showing the students how the program works, school nurses meet with individual students for ten to fifteen minutes every other week to check their progress. After 6–12 weeks the school nurses and students reflect on the students’ progress.

Advice
- Collaborate with the school principal, parents, teachers, etc. to assure success.
- Start small with three to five students.
- Encourage feedback on all aspects of the program.

Evidence of Success
- Summative and formative evaluation from the school nurses show that our continuing education is beneficial. Approximately 200 school nurses attended our three on–site continuing education events, and over 60 participated in our on–line continuing education program. Around 20 students in four school districts have enrolled in the ABCDiet Program. Their school nurses report success with adherence to the program, with students being more aware and mindful of their eating and activity patterns.
We want to help children understand that cleanliness is important to good health. We want them to develop a greater awareness of their hands and the role hands play in the spread of disease. An effective way to do this is to present our program by using high school students. The title of the program is “Raising Healthy Happy Hands!”

The program is based on the four Principles of Hand Awareness (Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette). WASH your hands when they are dirty and BEFORE eating. DO NOT cough into your hands. DO NOT sneeze into your hands. Above all, DO NOT put your fingers into your eyes, nose, or mouth.

We want to create a multilevel approach through a visual stage presentation and a hands-on activity that will reinforce the message. By using high school drama students to present the program, we hope to inspire the elementary school students who look up to the older students. This interconnection between the age levels will be beneficial to both. We also plan to involve the community through cooperation with UPMC McKeesport Hospital and their Infection Control Director, Donna Inglot, R.N., B.S.N., C.I.C. UPMC McKeesport Hospital will support our effort by providing guidance and educational materials.

There is a 15–20 minute skit with a Henry hand puppet that will be used in a puppet show setting. We will also include a self-explanatory teachers’ curriculum guide and a coloring/activity book that is a multimedia lesson plan–based curriculum and complies with many of the federal health education guidelines. In addition, we will be using a product and demonstration that will provide the children with a visible understanding of what germs could look like.

Glo Germ solution is applied to the palm of one hand and spread over both hands as if applying lotion. When wiped off with a paper towel and once placed under the UV (ultraviolet) lamp, the children will be able to see “glowing germs” that exist before hands are washed. The children will then wash their hands using the hand washing techniques that the Henry the Hand Program taught them. The amount and effort required to remove the simulated germs is equal to that of removing most bacteria. Again, the children can view their hands under the UV lamp. The UV lamp reveals the remaining “germs” as proof of how well they used proper hand washing techniques.

Continued on next page.
Description, continued

We hope to make this program an annual event throughout all of our elementary school buildings, therefore reinforcing the message and making a lifelong impression.

Advice

Organization and coordination between schools in the district is a key factor in success.

Because of high school students’ schedules, a cast of performers that includes alternates is advised.

Evidence of Success

This is a new practice in our district, so although we anticipate lower absentee rates and a decrease in the number of ill children seen by our school nurses, we do not have concrete evidence of its outcome. Our school buildings did install hand sanitizer dispensers in each classroom throughout the district, and that measure alone seems to have decreased our absenteeism during last year’s cold and flu season.
Introducing the Wellness Policy to New Teachers: Bellefonte Area School District

Contact Information
Contact Person: Barbara Eckley
Contact Person’s Title: Director of Food Services
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Contact Person’s Phone Number: (814) 355–4814 | FAX: (814) 353–2421

Objective
Prior to the start of the school year, educate our new teachers on our wellness policy and nutrition guidelines.

Category
Healthy School Environment

Description
I ordered soft personal–size six–pack coolers in our school colors and had our mission statement imprinted on the side of the bag along with our district name. Inside we placed samples of “acceptable classroom snacks” which included items such as raisins, Fig Newtons and animal crackers. On the outside of the bag was a place for a bottle of water. In the side pocket we inserted a copy of our school district’s nutrition brochure, which included answers to FAQ’s by parents, and a chart showing allowed and not allowed classroom party/celebration foods. We attached a card to the bag that said, “This wellness bag is presented to you by your local wellness committee.”

I distributed the bags to the new teachers during orientation over the summer and answered any questions they had pertaining to the school district’s wellness policy.

Advice
Involve the person responsible for orientation. Ask your superintendent what he/she prefers to be written on the bag.

Evidence of Success
Fewer questions and a clearer understanding of local wellness policy and nutrition guidelines.
Each individual in the school received a pedometer that was purchased with funds provided by a “Highmark Healthy High Five School Challenge”. Students were divided into competing classroom groups, with rewards given to the classroom that increased activity the most at the end of each nine–week grading period. Staff members were considered a separate classroom.

Participants recorded activity using PE Central’s website, www.peclogit.org. Individual as well as classroom activity was tracked.

The classroom with the greatest increase in the number of steps traveled each day was rewarded at the end of each nine–week grading period. Everyone showing increased activity level of at least 2,000 steps per day, or consistent activity of 10,000 steps per day, was rewarded with a variety of items such as tote bags, movie passes, bowling passes, skating passes, Burrell Events passes, etc. A traveling trophy was displayed in the winning classroom during the next competition period.

The following measures were taken to assist students and their families in increasing activity levels:

• Local activity–based businesses, such as the skating rink, gymnastics arena, and martial arts studios, agreed to provide a discount to Burrell School District students and staff.
• A student committee kept track of steps logged and posted a visual display in the cafeteria for all to see.
• Informational newsletters were sent home to parents so they could support the students.
• Daily tips were broadcast on daily announcements to help students with ideas and choices for increasing activity.
• Classroom teachers were given the opportunity to incorporate their own ideas into the classroom for increasing activity during the school day.

It is rewarding to try a new project, so do not be afraid to try. It is worth the effort.
Advice, continued

- Administrative support is necessary for success, so as long as you have that, forge ahead. Naysayers might become allies in the end.

- Observe individual and group reactions to rewards and adjust accordingly as the project progresses. In our case, some rewards were more popular than others, but the quantities were fixed because they were purchased at the beginning of the project.

- Enthusiastic staff members in the school are great role models and very helpful in motivating others.

Evidence of Success

- Classrooms that had enthusiastic teachers who served as positive role models and encouraged participation did better in both classroom and individual activity levels. There was clear competition between some classrooms to earn or keep the traveling trophy. The winning classroom also received cafeteria coupons for each class member to receive a snack that meets federal nutrition guidelines. Individual rewards were given to those who walked the farthest at the end of each grading period.

- After the first nine weeks, 42 students and staff received their choice of reward. In subsequent grading periods 52, 41, and 39 individuals received rewards. Over the course of the school year, numbers of students and staff who were rewarded remained fairly constant; however, there were different groups of individuals who were earning rewards. There were a few consistent recipients over the course of the school year.

- It was not unusual to have people comparing steps or showing off the fact that they were wearing their pedometers. Some people enjoyed the various activities on the website, such as “classroom hike across the United States,” while others reported increased individual activity because of the pedometer program.

- Although not everyone wore their pedometers at all times, nor did they always remember to log onto the website to record steps, the activity helped to increase awareness of individual activity levels. It also increased awareness of how difficult it can be to change sedentary habits.

- The project was featured in a Subway/Fox53 commercial that promoted healthy lifestyles in schools. It also earned an honorable mention from the University of Pittsburgh’s “Schools on the Move” recognition program.

- A year after the conclusion of the project, remnants remain. It is common to see individuals wearing Burrell Bucs pedometers. Students who are not happy with their BMI and percentile sometimes seek advice and are encouraged to use the pedometer and website to track activity. Not all rewards are immediately tangible, so even individuals who did not initially participate, may find their pedometer in the future and be motivated to use it.
School-Wide Walking Program, 15 Minutes a Day: Freeport Area School District

Description
- Childhood obesity can lead to many serious health conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, as well as put children at risk for low self-esteem and depression, all of which can affect a child’s learning. It has been well researched that childhood obesity is linked to physical inactivity. Because children spend the majority of their days sedentary in school, it was imperative to develop a school program to increase physical activity. Therefore, each day the students at Buffalo Elementary (together with their teachers) participate in a 15-minute walking program in an effort to increase physical activity. The students walk around the school at their own pace, but they are encouraged to increase the pace and steps to increase their heart rates. This practice teaches the importance of daily physical exercise, which leads to healthy bodies while also promoting lifelong fitness.

Advice
- Parents need to be included. Explain why the school is implementing a walking program (childhood obesity is on the rise with debilitating consequences).
- Reward the students’ efforts. A little positive reinforcement encourages healthy behaviors.

Evidence of Success
- Every student’s Body Mass Index (BMI) is measured annually, and although the numbers have not decreased, they have not increased either.
- Surveys from parents and teachers indicate they like the program. They appreciate the school’s efforts to promote healthy behaviors.

Contact Information
- Contact Person: Amy Sutara
- Contact Person’s Title: Elementary School Nurse
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Objective
- Promote a healthy lifestyle and help to prevent childhood obesity.

Category
- Healthy School Environment
**Recess “Mileage Club”: Garnet Valley School District**

**Contact Information**
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**Objective**
- Improve our students’ cardiovascular endurance and overall health by providing an organized physical activity, “Mileage Club,” at recess.

**Category**
- Healthy School Environment

**Description**
- “Mileage Club” is an activity in which students may participate during recess. Students wear pedometers and either walk, run, or jog on a walking trail. At the end of recess they report their number of steps to the volunteers and can earn individual and class prizes for their participation.

**Advice**
- Pedometers are not essential. Laps can be recorded with Popsicle sticks or by other means.

**Evidence of Success**
- Monitoring has shown that a large number of students participate in this program and really enjoy the running.
“Lunch Bunch,” “Walk for Wellness,” “Friendship Fridays,” and “Friendship February”: Harbor Creek School District

Contact Information
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Objectives
• Teach students how to plan a balanced meal.
• Explore nutrition–related occupations.
• Promote healthy decision–making in peer and family relationships.
• Promote physical activity in families.
• Promote peer leadership through nutrition education.
• Use music to motivate students to be physically active.

Category
Healthy School Environment

Descriptions
Lunch Bunch
The Klein School “Lunch Bunch” is a group of fifth and sixth grade leaders who plan wellness related activities for students, faculty, and families in the Klein community. To be granted membership into this group, all fifth and sixth grade students respond to a writing prompt that asks them to describe the following: what does wellness mean to you; how do you model wellness in your life; and if selected, what would you contribute to the group?

After the selection process is complete, the students begin meeting during their lunchtime on a monthly basis. We brainstorm activities, and we vote on the projects that we would like to complete each year.

Examples of previous projects include:
• adopting a healthful lunch week and planning a menu that was served at all Harbor Creek schools,
• designing a placemat that advertised the importance of wellness,
• planning a healthful picnic,
• sharing favorite healthful recipes, and
• designing a t–shirt logo that promotes healthy living.

Walk for Wellness
In the fall, all students, faculty, and staff participated in a “Walk for Wellness” event that was sponsored by Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA). We walked the halls of Klein School for 15 minutes while listening to motivating music. After our walk, everyone returned to their homerooms for a nutritious snack and a discussion about the importance of physical activity and healthful eating. This activity is repeated several times throughout the year. Many teachers have incorporated the wellness walk idea into their daily and weekly routines.

Continued on next page.
Description

Friendship Fridays
- Fourth and fifth grade girls participate in a group that promotes healthy relationships with peers and family members. We read “A Smart Girl’s Guide to Friendship Troubles” published by American Girl Library. We discuss key points in the book, and we role-play hypothetical situations that the girls might encounter. We set bi-weekly friendship goals and discuss these goals at each meeting. In February, we host a pajama party for the girls and their mothers. At this party, we watch the American Girl movie, “Chrissa Stands Strong,” and afterward we lead the mothers and daughters in a roundtable discussion regarding the friendship battles that Chrissa faces.

- All girls and their mothers take the American Girl’s pledge together. This pledge asks girls to stand up to put-downs, help those who are bullied, inform adults when needed, never use a computer or cell phone to hurt others, and encourage friends to also stand up against bullying.

- This group culminates by having the girls work together to create a friendship arch. They do this by choosing adjectives such as courage, forgiveness, and acceptance to describe them. They write these adjectives on bulletin board paper to create an archway that leads into the fourth and fifth grade hall. This archway serves as a constant reminder of the pledge for many fourth and fifth graders, even in the years to come.

Friendship February
- During the month of February, Klein School puts a twist on the traditional Valentine’s celebration. We celebrate friendship throughout the entire month.

- We use the mother/daughter pajama party as the kick-off event. Each Friday the girls in “Friendship Fridays” work together with the school principal to give a “Friendship Friday Food For Thought.” This message is announced each Friday morning.

- Also, rather than focusing on treats at classroom Valentine’s Day parties, activities are centered around friendship, anti-bullying, and developing healthy relationships.

Advice
- We have found that the programs are more effective when you involve kids in the decision-making process and allow them to take ownership of these projects. The students are more actively involved, develop leadership skills, and learn more from these events.

Evidence of Success
- This year the “Lunch Bunch” doubled in size. Many other students were motivated to join this group when they saw what the “Lunch Bunch” students were doing and the positive effect that it had on others.

- Last year (2008) the “Lunch Bunch” planned one meal that was served at all schools. The event was so successful that this year students want to plan a larger event that incorporates families of all Klein students. The “Lunch Bunch” learned that planning nutritious meals extended beyond the lunch that they eat at school each day. They recognized the need to involve families.

- After the first “Wellness Walk,” students began asking teachers to take them on additional walks. They are recognizing the need for a mental and physical break.

- Based on previous data, the fourth and fifth grade teachers recognized the need to educate the girls on friendship related topics. We have found that since “Friendship Fridays” have started, there have been significantly fewer friendship related issues.
While teaching a popular high school course entitled “Cooking Lite and Easy,” the teacher, a member of her district’s wellness committee, thought it would be good for her high school students to share what they learned with elementary children. She was asked by one elementary school to have her students do a presentation at their Wellness Day.

Students researched the information they wanted to present, created a presentation board, collected various items needed for displays, wrote the recipes, and contacted the Grain Council for pamphlets. Their teacher took them shopping for all of the ingredients needed to do their presentation. Students who volunteered for this project were given extra credit in the cooking course.

At the district’s Elementary Wellness Day the high school students gave a presentation about whole grains vs. refined grains and healthful drinks vs. sweetened beverages. Students also compared/evaluated nutritional value of the various drinks on the market and the hidden sugar content.

This activity can be extensive or minimal. It takes some prep work but the rewards are worth it.

This program has been repeated for several years at the Elementary Wellness Day.

Comments:
- Parents:
  “My child actually came home and asked me to make the cereal mix — he loved it! My daughter was very surprised at the amount of sugar in Coca Cola and vitamin water and she even asked me to buy some V8 Fusion because she learned that she could get one serving of fruit and one serving of vegetables in an 8–ounce glass.”
- Administrators:
  “What a great way to promote nutrition awareness — through your high school students becoming the teachers.”
**Physical Activity Period Before Lunch: Hempfield School District**

**Contact Information**
- Contact Person: Sara Miller
- Contact Person’s Title: Walk/Run Committee Chair and 2nd grade teacher
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**Objectives**
- Students will walk or run around a course for 20 minutes before lunch every day.
- Students will log goals and achievements in a walk/run journal.

**Category**
- Healthy School Environment

**Description**
- Every day before lunch, students walk/run for 20 minutes around a course that is slightly shorter than 1/2 mile. Then they cool down by walking around a loop until the teachers are ready to line them up to go inside for lunch.
- The students carry index cards with them around the course. Every student’s card is punched by a teacher for every lap completed. A student who has earned 20 punches can exchange that card for a construction paper foot and a new card.
- We line the tops of the walls in our hallways with the students’ “feet.” We start on the first floor at one end of our building and wrap around the first floor and continue up the second floor and back down to the finish line. When we reach the finish line, the entire school will participate in an activity reward.
- The students log their goals and achievements in a walk/run fitness journal each day.

**Advice**
- Make sure you have a willing group of teachers and staff to help make the program work.
- Students participate more when incentives are provided. This is our third year conducting the walking/running program, but it is the first year we are using punch cards and “feet” to earn rewards. This year we have more students running and earning more laps each day than in the previous two years.

**Evidence of Success**
- After this before–lunch exercise, our students are more focused and ready to learn in the afternoon. They look forward to the program and miss it on rainy days. As a teacher, I feel more focused and motivated for my afternoon.
Because of the large number of injuries taking place in the playground area containing overhead triangle bars, I decided to ban young students from that area. I had watched students using the bars, and I determined that the injuries were due to insufficient upper body strength. Students in third grade and older were able to navigate the bars much better than younger students.

Because of these observations, I instituted a system for third grade students to earn the right to use the overhead bars. Because the bars are not all the same distance from each other, I teach students how to pace themselves accordingly while they are going across. I also give them lessons about how to drop from the bars, especially if they become tired before they reach the end. They must then demonstrate that they are able to go from end to end on the bars and to use the proper technique to drop from the bars. After they have met these requirements they are allowed to use that piece of equipment.

As an outgrowth of this process, I teach playground equipment safety to kindergarten through second grade students. After classroom instruction we go out to the playground for actual demonstrations on equipment.

I reinforce these learning experiences by offering incentives for playing safely on the playground. I give stickers to any student in the school (grades K–5) who I “catch” playing safely. Students who are “caught” write their names on their stickers and put them into a bag that I keep for this purpose. At the end of each month a sticker is drawn from the bag, and the person whose name is on it has the opportunity to select from a group of prizes. Prizes are appropriate to the project objective; small playground equipment such as jump ropes and soccer balls.

I try to find five sticker recipients every day, and older student volunteers frequently help me with this part of the project by giving out some of the stickers to younger, deserving students.

Injuries still occur. When a student visits the nurse’s office because of a playground injury, we make it a positive learning experience by discussing what was done incorrectly and how to avoid another injury of that type.

**Advice**

- Adjust goals and instruction by grade level.
- Always use the same, clear language about equipment safety.
Advice, continued

Let the students know that you are not trying to be restrictive, and that your goal is to help them to play safely.

Evidence of Success

Children watch for me to come to the playground so they can show me their safe play techniques and earn stickers.

Children become interested in safety and ask appropriate questions about it.

Parents and teachers say that the children are excited when they win prizes. They like to hear their names announced for this through the PA system.
FITT PLUS Before–School Fitness Program: Neshannock Township School District

Contact Information

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Objective

The goal of the FITT PLUS before–school physical activity program is to educate students about the benefits of physical activity and to encourage physical activity outside of physical education classes.

Category

Healthy School Environment

Description

FITT PLUS is a voluntary before–school physical activity and education program. It was developed by the PE teacher and a Slippery Rock University professor in the Physical Education Teacher Education department. The six–week FITT PLUS program targets third grade students and is offered twice per year. FITT PLUS consists of 30 minutes of fun physical activity focusing on a combination of health and skill-related physical activity followed by ten minutes of PAE (physical activity education). The FITT principle (Frequency, Intensity, Time, and Type of exercise) is a major aspect of this program.

Advice

After–school programs at our district have low attendance. The FITT PLUS before–school program is well attended, and the school seems energized on FITT PLUS mornings because of the fun and educational “energy” coming from the gymnasium.

I need to arrive ten minutes early on FITT PLUS mornings, but I am more than willing to give this time to the program.

Evidence of Success

Classroom teachers have shared with me that the children who participate in the before–school program come to class energized and ready to learn. Those students who may have minor discipline issues seem to have better on–task behavior.

Parents have commented that their children are eager to get to school on FITT PLUS mornings.
Two challenges facing our schools today are providing meaningful remediation for students and addressing our NESD Wellness Policy. One way in which we meet the two pressing needs for remediation and increased activity levels is through our Recreation or Remediation program (R&R). We know that exercise and activity are critical for optimal brain functioning, especially during the adolescent years. On our cycle day four, during each period of the day, approximately 20–30 students (per team of 130 students) are provided remediation activities while the other students who may be proficient in that particular standard are sent to one of four recreational activities. This equates to approximately 150 students remediated while the other 450 students exercise during our day 4–cycle day. The individuals “pulled” for remediation change frequently so that all students have the opportunity to benefit from both activities. This has accomplished both of our objectives.

Meaningful remediation has proven successful only in small groups, and the other students concurrently benefit from exercise and movement. Students, staff, and parents all view both of these options as beneficial and never as punitive.

Our students have five periods per cycle of physical education and one period per cycle of R&R. Because our schools use a six–day cycle, most of our students have at least one period of exercise and activity every day of the cycle. This program allows our students to be remediated and remain active at the same time. Both of these requirements are valuable to our students’ overall wellness and academic achievement.

The best advice I can give is to make tutoring and/or remediation non-invitational. It is important that a school has an institutional and built–in response plan to help students who are struggling academically. Furthermore, middle school students typically struggle to stay after school for this help due to transportation challenges.

This program is creative, and it is an easy implementation for existing master schedules.

Finally, when implementing a similar program, it is valuable to communicate clearly that this program is intended to benefit both groups of students, those needing remediation and those needing recreation.

Continued on next page.
Evidence of Success

- We are seeing gains in academic achievement.
- We have reduced our course failures from 203 down to 66 total courses failed for the 2007/2008 school year.
- Furthermore, we have had zero students retained in grade since the implementation of R&R.
Branding the School Wellness Program: 
Owen J. Roberts School District

Contact Information
Contact Person: Jo-an Rechtin
Contact Person’s Title: Wellness Coordinator
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Objective
We have created a unique identity for the concept of wellness in our school district. Our wellness “brand,” “Fit for Life,” is the way the public thinks about what the district wellness council does. Our goal is for our brand to help people feel positive about leading a healthy lifestyle, and to motivate them to support our wellness policy.

Category
Healthy School Environment

Description
We developed a strong mission statement and professional logo. We use an aggressive public relations campaign to create brand awareness.

We started by publishing handouts to help our adult audiences in three key areas:

- classroom celebrations,
- nutrition for meetings, and
- healthful breakfasts.

We created a website, www.OJRFitforLife.com and linked to it, through our logo, from the school district website. We publish articles in every edition of the Advocate, our district newsletter.

We contact local newspapers to cover school wellness events, and we have had many front–page splashes. We utilize local television and radio.

We established a spokesperson who presents frequently to PTA and community organizations.

We use our logo on banners, posters, handouts, and promotional merchandise including pedometers, t-shirts, and water bottles.

Advice
There was debate about spending money for the development of a logo and website. We knew that within our district we could find talent to produce an attractive logo and website.Ultimately, it was decided that a financial investment would help create the strong brand we desired.

We received a grant from the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation. We then hired a creative organization, “Design for Social Impact,” who specialized in promoting important public issues. “Design for Social Impact” created the striking visuals we needed to bring attention to our mission, to educate our community, and to galvanize individuals to positive action.

Continued on next page.
**Evidence of Success**

“Fit for Life” is becoming a “household brand” in our community. The evidence manifests itself in many ways. We have built a strong infrastructure of active volunteers. The entire culture of our district is changing to promote good health.

Many teachers now use wellness themes in core subject areas including math, science and art. One art teacher taught an entire unit on cereal boxes and how cereal is marketed to kids. The students then created their own nutritious cereal brand and used marketing techniques to create cereal boxes that would sell their product. Her prevailing goal is that students will use the visual arts to promote healthful practices.

Bulletin boards feature the food pyramid and other healthful messages integrated into common themes.

Our community has been activated. The national magazine, “Today’s Diet and Nutrition,” is published in our district, and the magazine offered everyone within the district a free one-year subscription. A community swimming pool opened for a free evening for everyone in our district.

School groups now contact the wellness council to partner in healthful fundraisers such as walk–a–thons and dance–a–thons. Math night in our elementary schools now includes healthful cooking and exercise.
We set up a professional photo shoot using our high school sports players to pose for large posters that were framed and displayed throughout our district. These posters were used to promote healthful eating and drinking throughout the food court. We used yogurt and milk — complete with milk mustaches. We used clever phrases such as “South Fayette’s Soccer Team Gets a Big Kick from Healthy Eating.” This photo was presented using two senior soccer players holding milk with vegetables displayed all over the floor.

The models (students) took a lot of pride in the role of “mentoring” our middle school and elementary school–aged students. The photo shoot was a lot of fun. The photo shoot, along with switching to the plastic bottles, was a way to kick off the “Healthy Nutrition” campaign throughout our district. We try to encourage our students through mentorship. Our younger students look up to our high school students, which contributes to the success of mentoring.

After the promotion and the change to clear bottles, we found that our students’ annual milk purchases increased 37,221 units over the previous year.

The posters are the talk of the town.

Contact Information
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Objective
Our objective was to (1) increase the amount of dairy (milk and yogurt) that the students were purchasing by switching over to clear plastic bottles, and (2) encourage three–a–day dairy to our student population by presenting our students in a photo shoot as “mentors” to promote healthful eating.

Category
Healthy School Environment

Description
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Advice
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Evidence of Success
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The posters are the talk of the town.
Description

We work through local growers to acquire produce that is higher quality and less expensive than can be obtained commercially. When ordering apples, we order ten cases at a time and ask for a variety of eating apples of the orchard’s choice. Along with the standard Red Delicious (which we ask to be a limited percentage of the total), we get many varieties including Honeycrisp, Winesap, Gala, Macintosh, etc. The case price this year was $18 for the entire year, for all varieties, compared to a commercial price that fluctuated between $20 and $36/case.

To get our apples, we worked with the grower to make it easy for both of us and to not put an undue burden on the farmers. One of our elementary schools is located about four miles over a mountain from the orchard. The orchard delivers the apples to that school and from there they are picked up by the district’s delivery/mail van and brought to the high school for distribution to the other schools as needed.

Potatoes are available from a local potato farmer who cleans and bags them for sale to grocery stores. We contacted the farm and found that they would be happy to deliver 50 pound bags of potatoes to us as needed. Instead of instant mashed potatoes, we make the real thing in all schools. We also use them for oven-fries and parsley potatoes. With all of the prepared foods now in use, the labor was already available to take the extra time to make something good from something local. We pay $15/bag. Current commercial price is $18.30/bag.

We have also registered as a “PA Preferred” school district and use signage from that program to identify local items on our service lines.

Advice

It is good to realize that farmers are busy, much as we are in school foodservice. It is important to be flexible. Questions to consider:

- Find out the extent of their supply. Can it get you through the year? What will you do when they run out?
- What packaging do they use? (We hesitate to buy produce that is not packed the way we would get it from a commercial supplier, though we are not averse to doing so if the product is clean and packed consistently.)
- How will it get to your schools?
- Does the supplier have a minimum purchase required for delivery, and if so, can you accommodate the amount required for a delivery?

Continued on next page.
Advice, continued

• How much lead time do you need to give the farmer for a desired delivery date? (They cannot always deliver the next day, but often our deliveries do arrive the next day.)
• Is the product cleaned, or will extensive cleaning on site be necessary?
• What happens if you get a poor quality product or spoilage? What is the return policy? Be fair: is it the farmer’s fault or yours? Are you ordering too much and storing too long, or did it arrive with spoilage?
• What is the price and how long will that price remain in effect?
• Are you going to require a contract, insurance, etc.? (We do not. The farmers are reputable and already sell their products commercially both on and off the farms.)

To make our orders worth the farmers’ time and delivery cost, we plan our menus to include the product at all schools during the same week. When we order potatoes, we get 12 bags (600 pounds) per order. This is better for the farmers than asking them to deliver two bags a week. For the volume of our order, we are recognized as a large and local customer, and as the length of the relationship grows, so does the trust and respect.

Evidence of Success

With 1,946 students in the district, our apple usage prior to going local was about one or two cases/week. Locally, we get crisper apples with a wide variety of taste profiles. Our usage jumped from five or six cases a week to triple that and remains steady all year. The quality speaks for itself.

As for potatoes, I know few, if any, people who prefer instant to real. Although we wash the potatoes again before use, we do not peel them. It took about two meals with the new real mashed potatoes before they took off. Many students were wary of skin–on or “dirty” mashed potatoes. I explained to anyone who asked about it that much of the fiber, minerals, and vitamins are in the skin, and I would not deprive them of that benefit.

About a week after we decided to use local real potatoes we received an e–mail that all the instant mashed potatoes we wanted would be available free through commodity channels for the remainder of the school year. We decided to stick to the locals anyway, and we have not looked back.

We use about 200–250 pounds of potatoes in the junior/senior high school each time they are on the menu. That works out to about 800 servings to 975 students which is a testament to the success of the product. They are on the menu between one and three times a month. It is a lot of work to cut them into chunks, but several cooks get together and make fairly quick work of it. We also managed to get a large food processor through a grant. This enabled us to get a large–dice potato very quickly, and we now use that for the mashed potatoes. The parsley and oven–fried are still cut by hand for a larger chunk size. Real potatoes are good, and our students know it, and they show it through their consumption levels.
The school nurse appears on the school television station to discuss why eating five fruits and vegetables a day is important. She developed the “Health Habits Hall of Fame.” She challenges students to eat a fruit and/or vegetable during lunch. Periodically she will go into the cafeteria with a camera and take snapshots of students eating fruits and vegetables. Their pictures are then posted on a bulletin board for all to see in the cafeteria. The kids love having their pictures taken and strive to show her that they are eating fruits and vegetables.

Advice
This is an easy way to encourage kids to eat fruits and vegetables, and it gives them reinforcement by seeing their pictures displayed.

Evidence of Success
Every time the school nurse walks through the cafeteria for any reason, she is inundated by students trying to show her that they are eating a fruit or vegetable.
Farmer’s Markets, Recipe Contests, and Local Chefs Educate Students: Great Valley School District

Contact Information
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Contact Person’s Phone Number: (610) 889–2100 | FAX: (610) 889–2120

Objectives
- Expand the culinary horizons of the high school students.
- Engage high school students in creating recipes for healthful snacks and breakfast foods.

Category
- Nutrition Services

Description
- In 2007–08, we conducted a farmer’s market several times a month during lunchtime at the Great Valley Middle and High School. Retired teachers and students helped to present and distribute fruits and vegetables for tasting at no charge. Nutrition information was also available.

- In support of the farmer’s market, the family and consumer sciences classes conducted a recipe contest that required contestants to create healthful recipes for snacks and breakfast foods. The food service department then prepared the winning recipes and offered them as part of the National School Lunch Program.

- Local chefs visited the school and prepared their specialties for the students to taste.

Advice
- Involve students in the distribution of the foods to be tasted.
- Encourage student participation by having them create recipes for the food service department to prepare and serve.
- Try to obtain a grant to support the purchase of taste–testing foods.
- Be sure to advertise before taste–testing events.

Evidence of Success
- The students have inquired when the taste testing is going to start this year.
- A local corporation asked us to reapply for their grant. (The grant has been awarded, and we re-started the market in January 09.)
- Local restaurants have offered their assistance again this year (2009).
- The family and consumer sciences teacher is including the recipe contest as part of her curriculum this year.
Working with the principal, we altered our daily schedule to “build free breakfast into the school day” for all students at the high school. Prior to this, students were offered breakfast before school started at the typical paid, reduced, or free rates. Our participation was about 30 kids a day out of a possible 450. There were too many things competing for their time: sleeping in, socializing with their friends, busses arriving too close to start time, the stigma of only “free kids” eating breakfast, etc. By implementing “Universal Free Breakfast After First Period,” we were able to alleviate all of these distractions. Students who are well fed are more focused on their schoolwork and not distracted by hunger pangs.

Advice
This was one of the easiest things I have ever done in the food service program, and it has had a huge positive impact on so many kids. This success was possible because of a 100% supportive principal, kitchen staff who are always willing to try new things to get more kids to participate, and last but not least, a superintendent and school board who always put the best interests of the kids first, such as offering breakfast free to everyone even if it means there will be a financial cost to the district.

Evidence of Success
We now serve as many breakfasts as we do lunches! We serve breakfast and lunch to over 350 kids every day!

Before this change, the kids did not feel the need to be at school on time when all they were missing were morning announcements and homeroom attendance. Now, tardiness has decreased considerably because students go directly to their first period class when they arrive at school, and missing class is more serious than missing morning announcements.

Trips to the nurse in the mornings with hunger-related complaints have decreased.

Trips to the principal’s office due to disciplinary issues have decreased as well.

We have seen an improvement in student behavior/attention span in the classroom in the morning, which we believe is because students are no longer hungry, grouchy and only thinking about how hungry they are.
Description

The district faced falling revenues, a lack of student participation and a lack of parent support for both the breakfast and lunch programs at NPHS. The Coordinator of School Nutrition Services, in collaboration with the building principal, implemented the Menu Committee program to engage students and parents in brainstorming, discussing and making recommendations for positive changes to increase school meals participation. Menu Committee members polled their peers to get suggestions for new products that are both tasty and nutritious. They also participated in taste testing events, which resulted in their own recommendations for new foods on the serving line. New recipes, as well as the introduction of new and different foods, were also presented to the committee for their input.

In the North Penn School District, students in each of the district’s 18 buildings “name” a lunch to be their “signature lunch.” The Menu Committee then prepares and serves the student–named lunch at each school of origin. Participation always increases on these days, and menu items that are very popular come to be offered district–wide.

An example that was developed by the high school is the “Knight’s Delite,” a sandwich on a whole-wheat roll with ham, low fat cheese, lettuce, tomato, and low fat dressing. The students in all of our schools love this lunch! (The mascot is a Knight.)

Another fun example is the “Knappsnacker” sandwich developed by the students at Knapp Elementary School.

The Menu Committee activities have helped to create a good relationship between students and the school nutrition staff.

Advice

It is important to recognize that the student is the customer, and that student input, feedback, and buy–in is essential to a successful School Nutrition Services program. Parent understanding and support of the program is also a crucial component. Their partnership in the Menu Committee program helps to ensure buy–in at the family level. Working in collaboration with building and district leadership has ensured sustainability and measured success.

Evidence of Success

Participation in school meals at the high school has increased significantly since the onset of the Menu Committee program. Revenue is increasing, and both students and families have a more positive attitude toward the program.
The EAT.RIGHT.NOW program is the official Nutrition Education Program of the district. Entering its ninth year, this unique program is funded by the USDA food stamp program and provides nutrition education programs and services to food stamp eligible adults and children in the Philadelphia public schools. The goal of the program is to increase, within a limited budget, the likelihood that all food stamp recipients will make healthy food choices consistent with the most recent dietary advice, as reflected in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the MyPyramid Food Guidance System.

Nutrition education is disseminated through a variety of methods: classroom teachers are provided with resource materials and lesson plans; a staff of Nutrition Educators are assigned schools to teach classes in a series of one–time interventions; a cable television show has been developed and aired for students in the classroom; and special program topics addressing sports nutrition, pregnancy and nutrition, and weight maintenance are taught in the middle and high schools. Our staff conducts home and school meetings, as well as parent workshops. Health fairs at schools regularly request nutrition information, and our staff personnel are present for these school events. Additional services offered include school–based farmer’s markets, school gardening, summer camp and after–school clubs, newsletters and professional performances of nutrition assembly programs. Trainings for teachers, coaches, nurses, and school administration take place on a limited basis to ensure that accurate nutrition information can be relayed to the children.

Continued on next page.
Description, continued

- Strategies during these activities include sampling of new foods, providing written follow-up activities for the children, and take home parent information to carry nutrition messages to the family.
- Our program operates from Kindergarten through 12th grade on a daily basis. Over 275 schools receive ongoing services in any or all of the above requested programs.

Advice

- In reviewing the objectives of the Wellness Policy, it is clear that all of these nutrition education objectives are met by operating the EAT.RIGHT.NOW program in our schools.
- By working with community partnerships to disseminate our programs and coordinating our efforts in such a large district, we have maximized the level of services we are able to provide to our schools.

Evidence of Success

- Individual schools repeatedly request our EAT.RIGHT.NOW program annually, and our educators are continuously providing services as the program progresses through the school year.
- A comprehensive annual evaluation/report has demonstrated program success with extensive outreach, meeting funding sources’ objectives, and providing excellent education practices.
- Teacher and administrator testimonials, children writing letters of thanks to our educators, and district support of our program to obtain funding are all evidence of the program’s success.
NRG Student Group Promotes Fruits and Vegetables: Solanco School District

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Objective
- Provide enticing fruits and vegetables to improve the diet of all of our students and to exemplify healthful eating habits of unprocessed foods.

Category
- Nutrition Services

Description
- The food service staff provides a “featured fruit or vegetable” at least twice a week in the cafeteria.
- The NRG student group leads the campaign for healthful eating by promoting fruits and vegetables to their peers. (NRG is a campaign developed by Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity which attempts to empower students to lead efforts to make changes in their schools related to healthy eating and physical activity. For more information, go to: www.nrgbalance.org.) The NRG group develops their own messages for television ads and posters to encourage the student body to eat more fruits and vegetables.
- The School Nurse leads a class on family fitness for students with BMI over 90%.

Advice
- Have a cafeteria manager who is creative, friendly, and co-operative in providing appealing fruits and vegetables.

Evidence of Success
- Students are trying new fruits and vegetables.
- We survey students periodically to see how our educational events have increased student knowledge. These surveys have been positive. Next year’s goal is to evaluate BMI percentages to see if these numbers are improving.
Kids are better able to remember things if they are provided with simple mnemonic devices. One summer I came up with the idea of using the slogan “Get E.F.S. in Phys. Ed.” to help them remember the health related fitness components of endurance, flexibility, and strength.

We revised our orientation sheet that is distributed to students on the first day of school. On the back page there is a picture of a boy named “H.A.L.” (healthy active lifestyle) and a girl named “H.A.L.I.E.” (a healthy active lifestyle is exciting). We have added the caption “H.A.L. and H.A.L.I.E. say “Get E.F.S. in Phys. Ed.” with the words “Endurance, Flexibility, and Strength” underneath. We did the same with Parent Night handouts. We made a poster to hang in the gym so kids could see it every day. It is something for everyone to use as a simple reminder (visual/auditory clue).

Our slogan fit perfectly with the modified activity pyramid assignment, which we already had in place for the sixth grade. The slogan was mentioned to the kids as we were explaining the assignment. When I first said the phrase they looked at me strangely, but then when I explained it to them they seemed to get the point. Not all of the kids get it right every time I ask, but we are working on it.

Advice

Just try the slogan out with your kids. Try to find an interesting way to display it.

It might be effective to come up with another catch phrase. In the past we used “We are Wellness Warriors — We Fight to be Fit.” Try to get core teachers to use the phrase/reinforce it with the kids. Possibly get the art teacher to come up with a poster contest. See if the technology education teacher could do silkscreen prints with the slogan.

Evidence of Success

At parent night I mentioned the slogan to parents. There was positive feedback and they liked the idea.
Obesity is a concern in every district, and we need to be proactive. We need to get the students away from the TV, the computer, and traditional video games. The DDR is a national phenomenon that promotes exercise and fun. With the introduction and continued use of the DDR in gym class, the students will understand the importance of daily physical activity and the need for balance between calories in and calories out. Physical activity will increase stamina, enhance sleep, reduce stress and tension, and make everyone feel better.

The whole school is involved in our program: food service manager, cafeteria workers, administration, teachers, support staff, parents, security personnel, secretaries, and most of all, the students.

In addition to using the DDR in gym class, it may be used as a reward for good behavior.

Evidence of Success
BMI’s will be compared and monitored by the school nurse throughout the school year.
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