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Illinois Schools Can! is a student wellness initiative funded by a USDA Team Nutrition Training grant awarded to the Illinois State Board of Education to support and encourage elementary schools to successfully take the HealthierUS School Challenge www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/index.html. For future updates on the Illinois Schools Can! initiative, check out the Illinois NET website at www.kidseatwell.org and sign up for the Illinois Schools Can! e-Newsletter.

Coming Soon! Public Forums Planned on Illinois School Food Service Rules Part 305 and the Illinois School Wellness Policy Task Force Nutrition Standards

The School Food Service Forum will be held at the following three locations beginning at 9:30 a.m.:

- **Monday, October 29, 2007** – DuPage ROE Professional Development Ctr
1519 South Grace Street, Lombard, IL 60148
- **November 5, 2007** – St. Clair County ROE Office
1000 South Illinois Street, Belleville, IL 62220
- **November 7, 2007*** -- Illinois State Board of Education, Board Room
100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777-0001

*Conference call capabilities are available.

For more information, please visit www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/part305_forums.pdf.

Get Ready, Get Set...Move & Crunch!

The Move & Crunch Challenge is a statewide competition where elementary school principals will log the days they meet their recommendations for physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption during one school week of choice in **March 2008**. In turn, they will challenge school staff, students and parents to do the same. Challenge materials are now available for download at www.kidseatwell.org.

Step Up to the Healthy Plate! Honoring Nutrition Excellence

By Samia Hamdan, MS, RD, Regional Nutritionist, Special Nutrition Programs, USDA, Food and Nutrition Service Agency, Midwest Region

Are you ready for a Challenge in 2007-2008? Take the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSCC)! HUSCC is an award program developed by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Agency (FNS) to recognize nutrition excellence in schools. Now going on to its fourth year, FNS has awarded 159 Gold Awards and 14 Silver Awards so far to schools across the country. The Midwest Region—representing Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Indiana—is proud to have four Silver winners from Indiana and one Gold winner from Ohio. FNS is looking for its first Illinois school to bring home the medal!

The FNS Midwest Regional Office celebrates each school's Challenge achievement with a school-led assembly, and a presentation of a plaque signed by the Acting Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner. Media representatives are always invited. Special guests are also invited, including USDA dignitaries from Washington D.C., State Board of Education staff, and of course none other than....Power Panther! Power Panther is USDA's mascot for encouraging families and kids to Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ FNS has publicly recognized HUSCC winners during National School Lunch Week and National Nutrition Month—a very special reason to celebrate the offering of nutritious choices in school lunch!

New Training Opportunity through the Illinois NET Program

Got Dirt? – Growing Healthy Kids is a new, complimentary, onsite workshop teaching school staff to bring core subjects alive, encourage healthier eating and increase physical activity for PreK-Grade six students through a gardening project. Register online at www.kidseatwell.org or call the Illinois NET Program at 1-800-466-7998.

Cooks for Kids Satellite Seminars by the National Food Service Management Institute

Register for a series of satellite training programs that promote healthful meal preparation for children at home, at school and in the community at www.NFSMI.org.

Illinois Food Summit 2007 - Building on Success through Collaboration

Mark November 8 on your calendar for the Illinois Food Summit 2007 at Kankakee Community College sponsored by the Illinois Interagency Nutrition Council and Illinois Extension. Learn about access to locally grown produce in

communities, foster collaboration among food summit partners, identify concerns about food security in Illinois, and hear about successful school wellness policy strategies. Register at <http://inc.aces.uiuc.edu>.

Moving Ahead of the Curve: Meeting Student Energy Needs

Change is on the horizon! Did you know that the USDA is currently revising nutrition standards for school meals to better align with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans? In order to better prepare child nutrition professionals for these upcoming changes, the Illinois Nutrition Education & Training Program is proud to announce Step Up Illinois School Meals, a new USDA Team Nutrition Training grant initiative. This new initiative includes a series of articles in Illinois Schools Can! e-Newsletters on practical application of dietary guidelines principles in school meals.

This article is the first of the series focusing on meeting student energy needs. Analysis of the 2003-2004 School Meals Initiative data from 581 Illinois schools indicated that ten percent of schools reviewed do not provide enough calories in reimbursable meals. At other times, excess calories may be provided when portion control is not employed.

Sufficient calories provide students with the energy needed to fuel their bodies for physical activity, growth and learning. Here are some proven strategies to make sure your menus meet student calorie needs.

- **Analyze and evaluate your current menus against USDA National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program nutrient standards.** Download a free USDA Team Nutrition Resource entitled Nutrient Analysis Protocols: How to Analyze Menus for USDA's School Meals Programs at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/nutrientanalysis.html.
- **Use standardized recipes** to assure that each time a food is served, it contributes the desired number of calories to student meals. Access standardized USDA Recipes for Schools at http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/usda_recipes.html.
- **Use age-appropriate portion sizes and meal patterns** to assure you are meeting the energy needs of each age group of students you serve. Download USDA Team Nutrition's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs, a free resource to review portion sizes and meal patterns for foods used within reimbursable meals. <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/foodbuyingguide.html>
- **Learn what other schools are doing to meet student energy needs.** Join Mealtalk at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/>, an email discussion group designed to provide a forum for child nutrition

professionals to communicate about innovative and practical solutions for common, day-to-day challenges.

Keep current on School Meal Initiative standards at www.isbe.net/nutrition. Visit the [2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) to learn more.

Sign Up for Free Team Nutrition E-Newsletter

Attention Team Nutrition schools! Read the Team Nutrition e-newsletter to share ideas for promoting healthy eating and physical activity through Team Nutrition at the state and local levels.

To subscribe, just go to:

http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=3&tax_subject=229&topic_id=1183&level3_id=5387.

Grant Opportunities for Elementary Schools

Good Deeds for Schools Grant Opportunity

Goody's and Ashley Judd will be giving away fifty, \$10,000 grants to K-12 schools for projects that significantly improve educational and/or extracurricular experiences for students. Deadline: 12/31/07. www.goodysgooddeeds.com/.

School Wellness Grant Opportunity

The U.S. Potato Board, the School Nutrition Association Foundation and the School Nutrition Association are teaming up to provide ten, \$2,500 grants for food service equipment for the healthful preparation of fresh or processed potatoes; physical activity equipment, such as for use on the campus playground or during physical education programs; or development or execution of nutrition or physical activity educational programs. Deadline: 4/15/08. www.healthypotato.com/health.asp.

National Excellence Awards – Produce for Better Health Foundation

This nationwide contest recognizes individuals that take an active role in spreading the message about the importance of fruit and vegetable consumption for better health. Entry deadline is 1/25/08. www.pbhfoundation.org/pulse/success/awards/excellence.

Wellness Resources

Elementary School Energizers

Download complimentary, ten minute, classroom based physical activities integrated with academic concepts at www.ncpe4me.com/.

Mini-Posters to Market Healthful Fruit and Vegetable A La Carte Options

Four, complimentary, 11" x 17" posters are available for your school cafeteria to promote increased consumption of 100% juice, grab and go fresh vegetables and mixed fruit. To request one or more sets of posters, call the Illinois NET Program at (800) 466-7998 or e-mail ilnet@kidsroe.org.

School Wellness Success Story

Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary School

Mix an assortment of fourth and fifth grade boys and girls, very sharp garden tools, good weather and lots of energy. Stir in a good supply of cooperation, a fair amount of sunshine, plenty of dirt and digging opportunities. The result...the Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary School Garden Club.

The Club started in September 2006 with a request for "just a little land," the BPC Garden Club has provided hands on gardening experiences for over 30 children. During the 2006-2007 school year, 20 fourth and fifth graders met after school two times per month. They planted seeds and bedding plants, plotted a garden bed, weeded, raked, clipped and weeded some more.

During the 2007 summer enrichment classes, the children harvested the first crop...radishes! They enjoyed lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers and green peppers. At the first meeting of the 2007-2008 school year, 27 children dug up and enjoyed baked potatoes from the garden. The children also have further developed an existing perennial memorial garden and enhanced a landscaped area near the front of the school property. Their boundless energy has also improved an existing shade garden. During November 2006, the children created table decorations for a nearby nursing home using dried flowers and other plants from the perennial garden.

Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary School Garden Club truly provides a "Green Hour" to the best kids in the world! Congratulations to Bushnell-Prairie for improving wellness for Illinois children.

Tell Us More about Your Success Story

Do you have a success story about improving wellness for elementary aged

children in your school environment? If so, e-mail us at ilnet@kidsroe.org. We may share your story in a future newsletter or on the Illinois NET web site at www.kidseatwell.org .

Be an Illinois Schools Can! Partner

If you have information about resources, training or grant opportunities that support student wellness initiatives in elementary schools, please email your contribution to ilnet@kidsroe.org. **The deadline for submissions for the February 2008 Illinois Schools Can! e-Newsletter is January 4, 2008.**

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