



February 2008

Illinois Schools Can!, a wellness initiative funded by a 2006 USDA Team Nutrition Training grant, supports and encourages elementary schools to take the *HealthierUS* School Challenge (HUSSC). For more information, visit www.kidseatwell.org/IllinoisSchoolsCan.html.

Grant Opportunities

Funding for Youth Baseball and Softball Programs – Deadline: Open

The Baseball Tomorrow Fund has grants available to school districts to improve existing or create new baseball and softball programs for children ages 10-16. Visit mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/community/btf.jsp?content=grant_process for more details.

Track Renovation Grants Available – Deadline: 5/31/09

Nike, Inc. and the Bowerman Track Renovation Program are offering matching grant funds to schools, districts and athletic booster clubs to refurbish or reconstruct running tracks that serve boys and girls ages 14-18. See www.nikebiz.com/responsibility/community_programs/bowerman_track_program for more details.

Youth Gardening Funds Available – Deadline: Varies Per Grant

The National Gardening Association and sponsoring companies are offering funding to schools with children ages 3-18 for youth gardening projects. Check out grant opportunities at www.kidsgardening.com/grants.asp.

Wellness Success Story – Morrison Community Unit District 6

Morrison Community Unit District 6 is on the move toward student wellness. The district jumped out of the gate when federal legislation required schools to develop a local wellness policy. School board and community members, parents, school staff, and administrators formed a policy team that dedicated their time to improving health within the school and community. Shortly after a policy was in place, team members attended a school wellness conference to learn more about pursuing a prestigious *HealthierUS* School Challenge certification for the two district elementary schools.

The wheels were set in motion and Northside and Southside Elementary Schools applied for and received mini-grant funding from the Illinois NET Program to pursue Challenge recognition during the 2007-2008 school year. Funds were utilized to purchase wellness curriculum and materials to enhance nutrition education in the classroom. Students have been logging individual hours of exercise and parents report encouragement from their children to join them for walks. Mr. Darryl Hogue, a principal and parent, reported his own children's desire to exercise along with their greater understanding of the importance of exercising. Sheila Richmond, district food service director, has been working diligently to align her National School Lunch Program menus with the Challenge nutrition criteria. The students, parents and teachers have all enjoyed the healthful additions to the daily meals. With continued effort, Northside and Southside Elementary schools hope to be among the first in Illinois to receive *HealthierUS* School Challenge recognition.

Congratulations to Morrison Community Unit District 6 for making great strides towards wellness for Illinois children!

Got Success? Share Your Story

Do you have a success story for improving nutrition and/or fitness for elementary students in your school environment? If so, e-mail us at ilnet@kidsroe.org. We would like to share your story in a future newsletter.

Wellness Events and Training

Get Ready to *Move & Crunch* with Elementary Principals – March 2008

In an innovative new program to promote student health, elementary school principals will take the lead! Principals from elementary schools participating in the *Move & Crunch Challenge* will log the number of days they meet physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations for one school week in March 2008. They will also engage school staff, students and their parents in this friendly competition. Schools will be rated on their *Challenge* activities and the top schools in three different size categories will earn a grant of \$800 to spend on student nutrition education curriculum and materials. Schools must submit their entries by April 15, 2008 to be eligible. Challenge resources, including the application and rules, may be downloaded at: www.kidseatwell.org/MoveCrunch.html.

The Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance developed the *Move & Crunch Challenge* program. Funding for this project has been provided by a 2006 USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant. The purpose of the *Challenge* is to create local wellness role models for students through a fun statewide competition.

Onsite *HealthierUS* School Challenge Training Available

The Illinois NET Program offers training on the *HealthierUS* School Challenge program. ***HealthierUS School Challenge: A Sneak Peek at Model School Criteria for Student Wellness***, provides key information on ways to better align school lunches with the Dietary Guidelines through *Challenge* nutrition criteria. The workshop covers additional criteria for foods sold outside of school meals, opportunities for physical activity and nutrition education. Participants will receive strategies for success and an opportunity to evaluate lunch menus against *Challenge* criteria. Schedule a workshop at www.kidseatwell.org/workshops.html or call (800) 466-7998.

Save the Date for Satellite Seminar March 13

The National Food Service Management Institute is continuing its *Cooks for Kids* satellite training programs with *Celebrate Breakfast* on Thursday, March 13, 2008. Each episode focuses on healthful food and cooking techniques for schools and home and includes downloadable handouts. For more information about this training series or to view past episodes, visit www.nfsmi.org.

Regional Menu Planning Workshop

LunchByte Systems, Inc., the home of NUTRIKIDS meal planning software, has menu planning training available for school nutrition professionals in Springfield, 2/25/08-2/26/08. Visit www.nutrikids.com/calendar/month.php?type=training&loc_type=Regional to register.

Save the Date for a Statewide Wellness Conference

The Illinois State Board of Education and Action for Healthy Kids-Illinois are planning an Illinois Wellness Conference, Tuesday, May 6, 2008 at the Decatur Hotel & Conference Center. More details will be shared in the next issue.

Partner Contributions

Taking the Challenge to Improve Student Wellness Just Became Easier

The *HealthierUS* School Challenge (HUSSC) recognizes schools for meeting and *exceeding* the current National School Lunch Program nutrition standards, by adding more whole grains, dark green and deep orange fruits and vegetables, low-fat and skim milk options, and a variety of legumes. HUSSC also requires schools to provide nutrition education and an opportunity for children to be physically active. These criteria are modeled after the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

The *HealthierUS* School Challenge now has three levels of certification, including a new Bronze Certification. This level reflects all of the same nutrition and physical activity criteria as the Silver Certification, but offers a lower, 62% Average Daily Participation (ADP) for students required to participate in the National School Lunch Program. For more details, visit the HUSSC website at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/index.html.

Join Action for Healthy Kids Today!

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is a nonprofit organization that addresses the epidemic of overweight, undernourished and sedentary youth by focusing on changes within schools. AFHK works inclusively at the national, state and local levels – in all 50 states and the District of Columbia – to improve children's nutrition and increase physical activity which will, in turn, improve their readiness to learn. Visit www.ActionForHealthyKids.org and sign up to join the Illinois Team today!

Meeting Student Nutrient Needs on the Forefront of Change

The USDA will contract with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to create recommendations for updating the meal patterns and nutrition requirements for the National School Lunch Program in accordance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Here are some great, practical strategies for improving the nutrient content of your school meals:

- **Bone up on calcium** by offering a yogurt parfait bar at breakfast. Check out www.midwestdairy.com/pages/index.cfm?TREE_ID=519 for a yogurt bar success story and an instruction sheet for setting up the bar at your school.
- **Bring your "A game" to the cafeteria.** Add dark green or deep yellow vegetables like romaine lettuce, spinach or shredded carrots to boost the vitamin A content of your salads.
- **Get fresh and colorful with** vitamin C-rich fresh fruits from the Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Cut kiwis in half and serve. Kids love scooping out the flesh with a spoon. Also try serving fresh strawberries when in season with a low-fat yogurt dip.
- **Boost the iron in school meals by adding beans.** Try hummus dip with fresh vegetables. Hummus is a Middle Eastern dip that is growing in popularity and is made with garbanzo beans. Check out the USDA recipe at www.nfsmi.org/Information/school_recipes/E-24.pdf. Also, try adding beans to your burritos, chili, quesadillas and soups.

You can view the full article *Meeting Student Nutrient Needs on the Forefront of Change* from *The Outlook*, ISBE Nutrition Program's publication for school nutrition professionals, at www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/outlook/2008/jan.pdf.

Wellness Resources

Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge Toolkit by Action for Healthy Kids

Help K-12 students, their parents and schools incorporate healthier food choices and physical activity into their daily lives through the *Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge* Toolkit. Download a copy at actionforhealthykids.org/gotuwc/index.php.

School Wellness Guide

The new Quick & Easy Guide to School Wellness, by the Healthy Schools Campaign, the National Association of School Nurses and School Health Corporation is now available for download at healthyschoolscampaign.org/campaign/wellness/.

New Wellness Policy Resource for Parents

The Action for Healthy Kids Colorado Team developed *Parents are the Power! Toolkit for Creating Change*, a resource to assist parents in becoming advocates for nutrition and physical activity. Download at www.actionforhealthykids.org/StateSpecificInfo.php?state=CO.

Healthy Food Guidelines for Schools

Food for Thought: Healthy Food Guidelines for Schools by the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department provides practical tips for making healthy and appealing foods available to students in schools. A copy is available for download at www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org/templateall.asp?id=234&hid=20&eid=21&did=22.

Report on Healthy and Profitable School Fundraising

Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can be Healthy and Profitable, a report from Centers for Science in the Public Interest is available for download at www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/schoolfundraising.pdf. Helpful resources include a list of contacts for fundraising companies and a list of schools and districts that have improved food and beverages and maintained profits.

Here's How You Can Contribute to the *Illinois Schools Can!* e-Newsletter

If you would like to share resources, training or grant opportunities that will assist Illinois elementary schools in meeting *HealthierUS* School Challenge criteria, please email contributions of 150 words or less to ilnet@kidsroe.org. **The deadline for April 2008 newsletter contributions is March 3, 2008.**

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