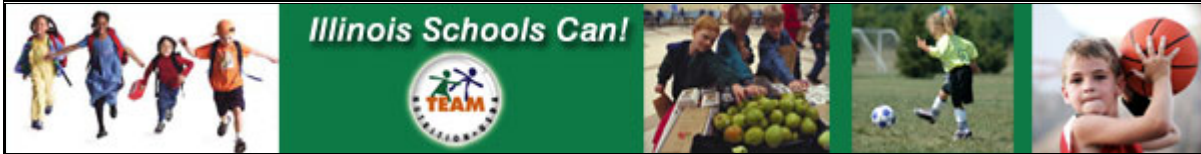


Illinois Schools Can! E-Newsletter November 2008



The *Illinois Schools Can!* newsletter is produced by the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program. The purpose of the newsletter is to assist school staff in promoting and supporting healthy lifestyle choices for students. Each issue includes information on resources, upcoming training and grant opportunities that can support school wellness policies. For additional information and resources, visit KidsEatWell.org/.

Wellness Events and Training

HealthierUS Schools Challenge 2008-2009

The new 2008 requirements for the *HealthierUS* School Challenge have been announced. To be certified, a school must:

- be an elementary school,
- be enrolled as a Team Nutrition school,
- submit a copy of a wellness policy and demonstrate a commitment to improving student health,
- improve nutrition quality of reimbursable lunches and food sold/served outside of school meals,
- maintain an Average Daily Participation in the School Lunch Program that exceeds the national average,
- provide nutrition education,
- provide physical education and opportunities for daily, unstructured physical activity.

The benefits of taking the Challenge include winning national recognition for student wellness initiatives, receiving positive publicity for your school and presenting to the community your commitment to student health.

A new *HealthierUS* School Challenge manual has been created for Illinois schools. It contains all the updated criteria, presented in a step-by-step plan, for completing the Challenge. It also has a removable chart showing the criteria for each recognition level which can be displayed for ease of reference. Call (800) 466-7998 for a copy or to schedule a *HealthierUS* School Challenge training program for school staff at your school.

Cooks for Kids Satellite Seminars

The *National Food Service Management Institute* will once again be airing their *Cooks for Kids* series live via satellite. This year's theme is *Healthy Cooking*

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Across America and each 30-minute program per month will feature a different region of the United States, highlighting USDA foods and fresh, locally grown items. The segments showcase recipes, techniques and practical solutions that school foodservice staff across the U.S. are using to prepare healthier and tastier meals. To view an episode:

www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Education/Satellite/CFK/season2.html/.

Online Training - *Nutrition Education that Works: An Integrated Approach*

Earn complimentary CPDU credits with this no-cost, online course provided by the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program that provides strategies for integrating nutrition topics into core subjects using USDA Team Nutrition curricula. Each lesson has been matched to the Illinois Learning Standards. Appropriate for PreK-Grade 5. Please visit

<http://www.kidseatwell.org/ILNETOnline/Scripts/Login/Login.asp> to register for this course and select a password. Once submitted, you will receive an e-mail confirming your registration and be provided a user name and link to log on and begin the course.

School Wellness Policy Training Part Three: Evaluation

Congratulations! This is the last step in creating a school environment which meets the federal government's mandate for local wellness policies. Coming in January 2009: the Illinois NET Program will be providing an interactive training program which highlights tools for evaluating the implementation of your local wellness policy. For those who have not yet implemented their policy, there is still time to take advantage of *Evaluating School Wellness Policy: Easier Than You Think!*, a training program to assist you in this step. To sign-up for either of these training programs or to get more information, please contact the Illinois NET Program at ilnet@kidsroe.org or call (800) 466-7998.

Coming in 2009: *Color My Meals Healthy*

This workshop developed by the Illinois NET Program is a fun, interactive experience for preschool child care staff to learn how to prepare healthy meals and snacks with "kid appeal". It shows you how to make menu changes as recommended by the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. For more information or to schedule training contact the Illinois NET Program at ilnet@kidsroe.org or call (800) 466-7998.

Local Wellness Policy Conferences:

In March 2009, the Illinois NET Program will be hosting three regional local wellness policy conferences. Session topics include: *Evaluating your Local Wellness Policy*, *Local Wellness Policy Success Stories*, and *Grant Opportunities*

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in Student Health. Dates and locations are as follows:

- Wednesday, March 18th at the NIU Outreach Center in Naperville
- Thursday, March 19th at the Holiday Inn-Champaign-Urbana
- Friday, March 20th at the Rend Lake Resort in Whittington

More information and registration details will be published on KidsEatWell.org in January 2009.

Mark the Date on Your Calendar - May 5, 2009

Illinois-Action for Healthy Kids is planning its 2009 *Illinois School Wellness from A to Z Conference*. It will be held at the Decatur Conference Center in Decatur, Illinois. There will be speakers, breakout sessions, exhibits and more. This year's keynote speaker will be Connie Evers, MS, RD, founder of *The 24 Carrot Press*. Through her work with parents, educators, and children, Connie strives to empower children of all ages to develop a zest for nutritious foods and an active lifestyle.

Grant Opportunities

Garden Grant for 2009 – Deadline: March 1, 2009

Each year, Mantis- a garden machinery manufacturer- provides awards to nonprofit gardening programs that enhance the quality of life in their host communities. Past winners have included schools, churches, park departments and community projects. Twenty-five programs will be chosen to receive a Mantis Tiller/Cultivator and their choice of a gas powered 2-cycle engine or electric motor – valued at \$349.00. For more information or to apply please visit www.kidsgardening.com/grants/mantis-criteria.asp/.

Outdoor Classroom Grant Program – Deadline: rolling

Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation, International Paper Foundation and National Geographic Explorer! have partnered to create an Outdoor Classroom grant program to fund outdoor learning environments for K-12 public schools around the United States. Grants up to \$2,000 will be awarded to at least one hundred schools. In some cases, grants for up to \$20,000 may be awarded to schools or school districts with major outdoor classroom projects. For complete program information and application procedures, visit the Lowe's website:

www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=pg&p>AboutLowes/outdoor/index.html/.

Physical Education for Progress (PEP) Grant – Deadline: rolling

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The U.S. Department of Education is awarding grants between \$150,000 and \$500,000 to 200 educational agencies to initiate, expand, and improve physical education programs for students in grades K-12. A complete list of possible projects that can be funded by the grant can be found on the *Peaceful Playgrounds* website at: www.peacefulplaygrounds.com/pepgrantssummary.htm/.

Wellness Resources

KidsEatWell.org earns an A+!

Our website has a new look and dozens of new resources for child care staff, school staff, parents and children. The new website has

- a user-friendly navigation system,
- nutrition education tools and resources,
- school wellness resources,
- *HealthierUS* School Challenge tips and a link to Team Nutrition,
- educational materials that can be downloaded and incorporated into your curriculum,
- Spanish-language resources for parents.

As always, you can find new grant opportunities, sign up for staff development programs or trainings, and earn CPDU credits with online courses. You'll find everything you need to create a healthier environment for our kids at KidsEatWell.org/.

MyPyramid Resources

If you haven't been to the MyPyramid.gov website, you are missing valuable opportunities to teach up-to-date nutrition and physical activity lessons that meet USDA guidelines for Americans. The website has added many new resources for all ages:

- **New!** *MyPyramid for Preschoolers* offers healthy snack and meal ideas, games, daily physical activity ideas, growth charts, and a customized *MyPyramid* plan for children ages 2-5.
- MyPyramid.gov has resources for elementary and middle school-aged children that include Team Nutrition Curriculum, posters, handouts and games.
- High school educators can utilize the *MyPyramid Tracker* to show teens how to keep track of their food intake and physical activity and ways to improve upon their lifestyles.

Coming in 2009: *Fact Sheets* for lower literacy audiences on physical activity,

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developing healthy habits, picky eaters and meal patterns in preschool.

New Lesson Plans for Grades K-10 Available:

Bridges to Wellness™: *Connecting School Meals and Classroom Learning*

The *School Nutrition Foundation*, in conjunction with the *National Dairy Council*, has created a nutrition education program designed to enhance classroom lessons with interactive cafeteria applications. The first two lessons (created in 2007) focused on the benefits of dairy and encouraging fruits, vegetables and whole grains. The two new lessons focus on physical activity recommendations and the benefits of a healthy breakfast. They target students in grades 5-10. These lessons are complimentary and can be downloaded from www.schoolnutrition.org/bridgestowellness/.

Beans: The Vegetable With More™

This fun and engaging lesson plan created for the *Beans: The Vegetable with More™* campaign targets elementary school children in grades K-5 about the benefits of beans. It includes a "Bean-go" game and a kid-tested recipe. You can download the lesson at www.nutritionforkids.com/emlnews/FK-Sept08.htm/.

Go Vegetarian to Help Cut the Fat in School Lunch Programs

Vegetarian products are a great way to increase fruit and vegetable, fiber and protein intake, while keeping the percentage of fat and cholesterol in foods low. An article in the *Vegetarian Journal's* Foodservice Update titled "Adding Vegetarian Options into School Lunch Programs" discusses the benefits of vegetarian alternatives and soy-based products. They also provide success stories from throughout the country and tips on some of the better products available. If your school lunch menu needs to "cut the fat" and improve nutrition check out the complete article at www.vrg.org/fsupdate/fsu20062/fsu20062_schoollunch.htm/.

Whole Grains Council Website

The *Whole Grains Council* website is a valuable resource for school foodservice staff, parents and kids. It provides information on what constitutes a whole grain, how to meet dietary requirements, new and innovative recipes that include whole grains and games for kids. The *Whole Grains Council* wants to help schools meet some of the challenges in providing whole grains to their students. Visit their website at www.wholegrainscouncil.org/resources and click on *Schools and*

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Whole Grains under the *Resources* tab.

Physical Activity Resources

The *National Association for Sport and Physical Education* has an online *Teacher Toolbox* that provides ideas for physical activity that meets physical education standards. Each month new activities are offered. Activities and lessons range from cardio and motor skills to cognitive and strategy skills, as well as respectful personal and social behavior. The activities are divided into elementary, middle school and high school levels. To learn more, go to www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=teacher_toolbox_oct08.html/.

School Wellness Success Stories

Red Hill Community Unit School District 10

Congratulations to Bridgeport Grade School, Petty Elementary, and Sumner Attendance Center for going above and beyond your school wellness policies to be a shining example of a successful school wellness story. These three schools in the Red Hill School District #10 applied for a *HealthierUS School Challenge* mini grant last year and with this money they were able to create some innovative programs throughout the school year that promote good nutrition and physical activity:

- A registered dietitian was hired to review lunch menus and make recommendations to increase whole grains, dark green and orange veggies, and add dried beans.
- The [MyPyramid for Kids](#) curriculum was integrated into physical education classes in four grade levels.
- They purchased nutritional posters and displayed them in the cafeteria.
- The school nurses took an additional nutrition course and then brought this information to the students through fun, interactive activities.
- A personal trainer visited the schools to bring new physical activities to the students and staff.
- The staff started an after-school "Biggest Loser" club to keep themselves motivated.
- The students took part in a "Taste the Spinach" activity, along with their principal and photos were taken of milk mustaches on the students as they learned about the benefits of dairy foods.
- **Finally, their hard work paid off as all three schools were eligible to apply for the Silver Level Award of the USDA's *HealthierUS School Challenge*!**

The schools asked the media to cover their different events and were able to show the community their commitment to wellness.

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In March 2008 the principals took part in the *Move and Crunch Challenge* and encouraged the students, staff, and families to participate. For the 2008-2009 school year the Red Hill School District's goals are to maintain the program changes they have created, take part in the *Move and Crunch Challenge* again and continue to look for innovative ways to make wellness a priority.

Way to Go Red Hill School District #10! You deserve a gold star!

Tell Us 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.

Partner Contributions

Wellness Policy Monitoring Tool

This fall *Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK)* will be launching an easy-to-use tool to help schools continually assess and improve implementation of their district's wellness policy. The *AFHK Wellness Policy Monitoring Tool* is fully customizable for each school and it provides an implementation 'desk top' where users can post their wellness policy initiatives; then note progress, next steps, resources needed, and the people responsible for each. A results page provides users with a score that compares them to the federal mandate, benchmarks for best practices and provides links to helpful resources based on areas needing improvement. Bookmark their website, www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/, to check availability.

Moving Ahead of the Curve: Increasing Fiber in Student Meals

Did you know that a recent national study* of school lunch programs concluded that fiber, based upon a menu survey and 24-hour recalls, was proportionately one of the two nutrients least consumed by students in the National School Lunch Program? The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* also identifies fiber as a nutrient of concern for children as most consume far less than what is recommended. People who consume diets with a variety of fiber-rich foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes tend to consume more vitamins and minerals and may have a lower risk of heart disease.

Here are some great tips for increasing the fiber content in your school meals:

- Serve more legumes (dried beans and peas), including kidney beans and black beans, on your menus. Check out great USDA recipes for marinated

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black bean salad, vegetable quesadillas and vegetable chili at www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Information/school_recipes/all_alpha.pdf/.

- Offer grab and go fresh fruit like pears, bananas, oranges and apples to students.
- Increase the color and flavor of your fruit salad by adding some seasonal fresh or frozen berries like raspberries, blueberries or strawberries.
- Serve more fiber-rich vegetables like peas, broccoli, cooked greens and corn.
- Add mashed red-skinned potatoes with the skins on to your current mashed potato recipe.
- Substitute whole wheat flour for 25 percent to 50 percent of the flour in your recipes. Increase the use of whole wheat flour gradually, checking product quality and student acceptability with each increase.
- Offer bread products with a whole grain listed as the first ingredient on the ingredient label including soft pretzels, wraps, sandwich buns and cold cereals. For more information on whole grain products, check out the USDA fact sheet highlighting whole grains for healthier school meals at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/DGfactsheet_grains.pdf/.
- Replace white rice with whole grain brown rice.
- Include oatmeal with raisins on your breakfast menu.

The USDA has contracted with the Institute of Medicine to create recommendations for updating school meal patterns and nutrition requirements for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. The anticipated changes will ensure that Child Nutrition Programs better align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

In an effort to help school nutrition staff plan, prepare and promote school meals that demonstrate these principles, the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program has developed the *Step Up Illinois School Meals* website. Access these web pages by selecting *Healthy Schools* then *School Meals* on the Illinois NET website at KidsEatWell.org/.

*Third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study;
www.fns.usda.gov/OANE/menu/SNDAIII/SNDAIII.htm/.

2008 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo

The 2008 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE) in Chicago, Illinois took place October 25th-28th at McCormick Place. Illinois NET Program took part in the poster session with a project titled *Survey To Determine Training And Resource Needs Of Local School Wellness Policy Stakeholders In Illinois*. Deborah Rees, Coordinator of the Illinois NET Program, presented the poster. To see how your school stacks up to other schools in Illinois you can view the results of the 2007 survey at

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www.kidseatwell.org/NeedsAssessmentSurvey/LocalWellnessPolicyNeedsAssessmentSurvey2007.pdf/.



Marjorie Sawicki from Illinois Dietetic Association stops to view the Illinois NET Program exhibit.

Be an *Illinois Schools Can!* Partner

If you have information about resources, training or grant opportunities that support wellness initiatives for Illinois schools, please email your contributions of 150 words or less to ilnet@kidsroe.org/. The deadline for the February 2009 electronic newsletter submissions is January 15, 2009.

The Illinois Nutrition Education & Training Program is supported by the Illinois State Board of Education.

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