



Healthy Schools Program Forum

2009 AWARDS PROGRAM



Generous support is provided by: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Supporting healthy schools nationwide

Each of the schools listed here, as recipients of the Healthy Schools Program National Recognition Award, have reached an important benchmark in improving the learning and working environments of students and staff. By making significant changes in the areas of healthy eating, physical activity and staff wellness, these schools have joined a growing movement of committed individuals and organizations that are working to combat childhood obesity and foster healthier communities.

Each of the individual school representatives listed here are being honored with the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award for their successes in engaging, motivating and leading others to take steps toward implementing sustainable healthy programs and policies.

The Alliance Healthy Schools Program is proud to recognize these individual and collective accomplishments that positively impact healthy eating and physical activity behaviors in school.

The Recipients of the 2008-2009 Healthy Schools Program Champion Award

Champions

KIM BARTHOLOMEW

Teacher
Windham High School
Windham, Maine

DR. CYNTHIA CLAY

Reading Specialist
Scott Lake Elementary School
Miami, Florida

JOHN FRARACCIO

District Supervisor of Health/PE
WNY Public Schools
West New York, New Jersey

DR. SHERRI HUFF

District Wellness Council Member
Birmingham City Schools
Birmingham, Alabama

JUDY HUFFAKER

Nutrition Education Specialist
Alhambra Schools
Alhambra, California

LISA MINIEAR

Chairperson-District
Wellness Committee
Franklin Central High School
Indianapolis, Indiana

DOMINICK PALMA

Assistant Superintendent
for Curriculum
West Babylon Schools
West Babylon, New York

ANITA SCHROEDER

Principal
Park Elementary School
Tulsa, Oklahoma

JACOB WEIERS

PE Teacher/Wellness Team Chair
Liberty Point Elementary School
Union City, Georgia

The Recipients of the 2008-2009 Healthy Schools Program National Recognition Award

Bronze

ALABAMA

Perry County
Albert Turner Senior
Elementary School
Francis Marion High School
Robert C. Hatch High School
Uniontown Elementary School

ALASKA

Fairbanks North Star Borough SD
West Valley High School
Kodiak Island Borough SD
Kodiak High School

CALIFORNIA

ABC Unified
Ella P. Melbourne
Elementary School
Alhambra Unified
Fremont Elementary School
Ramona Elementary School
Lynwood Unified
Cesar Chavez Middle School

CONNECTICUT

Plainfield
Plainfield Central Middle School
Plainfield Memorial School

FLORIDA

Alachua County
Gainesville High School
Dade County
American Senior High School
Bent Tree Elementary School
Blue Lakes Elementary School
Calusa Elementary School
Edison Park Elementary School
Gertrude K. Edleman/
Sabel Palm Elementary School
Herbert A. Ammons Middle School
Mae M. Walters Elementary School
Melrose Elementary School
North Miami Elementary School
Olympia Heights Elementary School

Royal Green Elementary School
Scott Lake Elementary School
South Pointe Elementary School
Toussaint Louverture Elementary
School

Escambia County

J.H. Workman Middle School
Woodham Middle School

Lee County

North Fort Myers High School

Pinellas County

Belcher Elementary School
Safety Harbor Elementary School

GEORGIA

Atlanta City
Burgess-Peterson Academy
Morningside Elementary School

Dawson County

Black's Mill Elementary School

Dekalb County

Glen Haven Elementary School

Fulton County

A. Philip Randolph Elementary School
 Campbell Elementary School
 Evoline C. West Elementary School
 Frank McClarin High School
 Liberty Point Elementary School
 Palmetto Elementary School
 Renaissance Elementary School
 Sandtown Middle School
 Seaborn Lee Elementary School

Glynn County

Glyndale Elementary School
 St. Simons Elementary School
 Sterling Elementary School

Houston County

Lindsey Elementary School
 Northside Elementary School
 Northside High School
 Pearl Stephens Elementary School
 Thomson Middle School
 Westside Elementary School

INDIANA**Perry Township**

Perry Meridian High School

KANSAS**Olathe SD**

Manchester Park Elementary School

KENTUCKY**Owsley County**

Owsley County High School

MAINE**MSAD 43 Mexico**

Mountain Valley Middle School

MINNESOTA**St. Paul Public Schools**

Randolph Heights Elementary School

MISSISSIPPI**West Bolivar**

West Bolivar High School

MISSOURI**Brookfield R-III**

Brookfield Elementary School
 Brookfield Middle School
 Brookfield High School

Moberly SD

Gratz Brown Elementary School
 Moberly Middle School
 North Park Elementary School
 South Park Elementary School

NEBRASKA**Crete Public Schools**

Crete High School
 Crete Middle School

NEW JERSEY**Camden City**

Cooper B. Hatch Middle School
 Dr. Charles E. Brimm Medical Arts
 High School
 Forest Hill Elementary School
 Pyne Poynt Middle School
 Woodrow Wilson High School

Sparta Township

Helen Morgan School

Trenton City

Benjamin C. Gregory
 Elementary School

West New York Town SD

WNY Public School Number 1
 WNY Public School Number 2
 WNY Public School Number 3

NEW YORK**Riverhead Central SD**

Pulaski Street Elementary School

West Babylon

West Babylon Junior High School

NORTH CAROLINA**Franklin County**

Long Mill Elementary School

Halifax County

Hollister Elementary School

Warren County

Vaughan Elementary School

OREGON**Coos Bay SD 9**

Blossom Gulch Elementary School

Oregon City SD 62

Mt. Ashland Academy-
 Oregon City High School
 Mt. Bachelor Academy-
 Oregon City High School
 Mt. Hood Academy-
 Oregon City High School
 Mt. St. Helen's Academy-
 Oregon City High School

Parkrose SD 3

Sacramento Elementary School

WEST VIRGINIA**Raleigh County SD**

Crescent Elementary School
 Sophia Soak Creek Elementary School

Silver**CALIFORNIA****El Monte City**

Durfee School
 Rio Hondo School

FLORIDA**Dade County**

George Washington Carver
 Elementary School
 Miami Edison Middle School
 Silver Bluff Elementary School

Hillsborough County

Kenly Elementary School

ILLINOIS**Danville CCSD 118**

Northeast Elementary
 Magnet School

NEW JERSEY**Pine Hill Borough**

Dr. Albert M. Bean School
 John H. Glenn Elementary School

West New York Town SD

Memorial High School
 WNY Public School Number 5

NEW YORK**West Babylon**

Forest Avenue Elementary School
 John F. Kennedy Elementary School
 Santapogue Elementary School
 South Bay Elementary School
 Tooker Avenue Elementary School
 West Babylon Senior High School

NORTH CAROLINA**Halifax County**

Inborden Elementary School
 Scotland Neck Primary School

TENNESSEE**Shelby County**

Farmington Elementary School

WISCONSIN**Eau Claire SD**

Sherman Elementary School



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Success Story **Champion**

Kim Bartholomew

Teacher, Windham High School

Windham, Maine

“Kim Bartholomew is an outstanding role model for both students and staff in the district. Kim takes a team approach within the school and across various disciplines to incorporate wellness into every aspect of the school day. As a result of her efforts, our district derives a great deal of pride from our shared commitment to wellness.”

—Jean W. Plourde, District Member, Windham School District

During her 25 years at Windham High School, Kim Bartholomew has engaged students and staff in issues related to nutrition and physical activity on a daily basis. The result of her continued efforts has been dramatic and sustainable changes across the district over the years. Having held a variety of wellness-related positions, including athletic director, health and physical education teacher and department head, Bartholomew led the charge to increase the amount of time students spend on being active each day. She has moved the physical education department in the direction of lifetime activities instead of the traditional competitive sports activities. She developed a diverse physical education program that is available to all students in all grades and includes 18 different electives, including rock climbing, fly-fishing, ballroom dance and weight training. Bartholomew herself developed and leads a popular elective called “Adventures in the Outdoors.”

Bartholomew is skilled in overcoming obstacles to implementing change, whether it is convincing the district to adopt a wellness policy or getting buy-in for the switch to healthier choices in the school store by letting the students in her health class choose which healthy snacks to stock. She engages students, staff and administrators by presenting solid, research-based evidence as to why change is needed and what would be gained by implementing wellness policies. She also uses research, including local and district survey results, to personalize and “put a face on” the state of the district. By eliciting participation from various stakeholders, she is able to minimize opposition and make all parties feel that their contributions are valued.

For being a visible advocate for wellness who constantly strives to positively influence students, staff and the community at large, Kim Bartholomew is a worthy recipient of the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

Dr. Cynthia Clay

Reading Specialist, Scott Lake Elementary School
Miami, Florida

“As Wellness Coordinator for the Healthy Schools Program at Scott Lake Elementary, Dr. Clay has helped create and coordinate many of the initiatives that have inspired positive and healthy change for all members of the school community. Dr. Clay motivates the students, staff, parents and community-at-large to embrace healthier lifestyles that will positively impact their everyday performance.”

—Claribel Garcia, Reading Coach, Scott Lake Elementary, Miami, Florida

The school day at Scott Lake Elementary begins with an “Energy Burst” to jumpstart young bodies and minds with a quick burst of physical activity. This innovation is typical of the changes that Dr. Cynthia Clay, a 17-year employee of the Miami-Dade public schools, has made as Scott Lake Elementary’s Wellness Coordinator. Dr. Clay is passionate about involving the entire school community (students, staff and parents) in physical activity. She used a grant to purchase exercise equipment that the staff and students now use and recruited a fitness instructor from among the school’s physical education staff who volunteers to lead a weekly staff exercise class. Dr. Clay brought a Weight Watchers at Work program to the school, resulting in 14 staff members collectively losing 168 pounds!

Dr. Clay has also encouraged PE teachers to assign art projects promoting healthier lifestyles that students complete with help from their parents (thus bringing parents into the equation). The projects are then showcased in the school’s hallways. Similarly, physical education has been incorporated into additional subject areas, such as “movement with music” in music classes.

Working with the cafeteria manager, Dr. Clay revised the school lunch menu to feature healthier ingredients and methods of food preparation. Staff members now enjoy fresh fruits, vegetables and water during meetings. To bring the healthy eating message into student’s homes, parents are invited to attend “Healthy Food Tasting Day.” And every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m., students and staff “Drop Everything and Eat Healthy,” during which students enjoy a healthy snack they have brought from home.

For her boundless creativity in coming up with new ways of making a healthy lifestyle more attainable, we award Dr. Cynthia Clay the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

John Fraraccio

District Supervisor of Health/PE, West New York School District

West New York, New Jersey

“Fraraccio created eight separate wellness committees and gives them the autonomy to grow organically within their respective sites. This has led to an exponential growth in the number of ideas and programs that are created and implemented in the schools. By allowing each school to utilize its greatest resource, the innovation of the community, he’s achieved great results in all of our schools and on the district level.”

—Sal Valenza, Food Service Director, West New York Schools

Thanks to the leadership of John Fraraccio, the West New York School District has embraced wellness as a centerpiece of its culture. Leveraging his experience as a 13-year physical education teacher, Fraraccio fostered a new spirit of collaboration and cooperation among food service, physical education and classroom teachers. This collaboration resulted in the creation of classroom lesson plans around the fresh fruits and vegetables offered in the cafeteria as well as physical education classes which highlight the importance of achieving a healthy balance between food intake and physical activity. To promote wellness for parents and faculty as well as students, he has brought in paid instructors for district wide staff wellness programs (such as salsa dancing, Weight Watchers meetings, smoking cessation and fitness boot camps) and hosts an annual Wellness Night for the entire school community to help achieve buy-in from parents and the community at large.

When he took the job of District Supervisor of Health/PE, Fraraccio was determined to make sustainable change—not just launch a few new programs only to see them sputter out after a while. He spearheaded a district wide “Commitment to Wellness” and fought for paid new staff positions at each school to implement healthy changes and take ownership and responsibility for them. This additional staff provides a vital link between Fraraccio’s top-down efforts at the district level and the important work of implementing healthy changes on the ground at each school.

For his comprehensive view of wellness and dogged determination to make positive, lasting changes for students, teachers and staff, John Fraraccio is a deserving recipient of the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

Sherri Huff, Ed.D.

Program Specialist for Physical Education/Athletics, Birmingham City School District
Birmingham, Alabama

“As the Program Specialist for the Birmingham City Schools, Dr. Sherri Huff has gone beyond the call of duty to bring our schools the resources they need to promote physical activity and healthy eating.”

—**Sharon Smith, Coach, Glen Iris Elementary School**

Dr. Sherri Huff has been instrumental in bringing her school district’s wellness efforts in line with current best practices. She has linked district schools to community organizations that share common wellness goals and has helped schools identify and obtain grants to fund wellness programs. Whether it is hosting information sessions for parents about what they can do at home to complement school wellness efforts or helping to build a school playground, Huff is a vital and engaged presence who is always personally involved in efforts to make her schools, and her community healthier places to learn, work and live.

Huff has worked at the district level, with individual principals and with each school’s wellness council leader to implement changes. She brainstorms with teachers at all levels and in all subjects about creative ways of integrating wellness concepts into the classroom and implementing physical activity throughout the school day. Recognizing that there are many wonderful resources available to schools, she has reached out to community partners such as Blue Cross Blue Shield that deliver no-cost wellness-related workshops to schools as well as to experts such as Lisa Perry at the Healthy Schools Program, who conducted a mandatory workshop on best practices in physical education for all district teachers.

For her success in bringing her district together around their support of healthy eating and active living, Sherri Huff is a deserving recipient of the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

Judy Huffaker, R.D.

Nutrition Education Specialist, Alhambra Unified School District

Alhambra, California

“Judy Huffaker links our district’s wellness policy to the well-being of our students and staff and communicates our shared goals around healthy eating and active living to the schools, our district and our community.”

—**Maria E. Sanchez, Principal, Alhambra Unified School District**

As the Nutrition Education Specialist for Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD), Judy Huffaker oversees the program that provides nutrition education and physical activity promotions to more than 10,000 students, teachers, parents and community members. She encourages individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle through programs that include cooking in the classroom, Harvest of the Month (in which classrooms are provided with a variety of fruits and vegetables to be used in nutrition and health education lessons), staff development, school vegetable gardens, family nutrition nights and supermarket tours. Huffaker promotes International Walk to School Week, during which hundreds of district students and parents walk to school together.

Drawing on her extensive background in administrative dietetics in health care and the school environment, Huffaker played an important role in developing the district’s wellness policy. Aware that many schools lack the resources to create comprehensive wellness programs, she forged partnerships with district local offices and community agencies that bring much-needed educational programs and resources into the schools and supplement school-based efforts. Next year, she plans to provide students with leadership training that will enable them to take what they have learned about healthy eating and physical activity into their communities and inspire others to adopt healthy habits.

For constantly striving to find new ways of communicating the benefits of active living and eating healthy to students, staff and the community, Judy Huffaker is a worthy recipient of the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

Lisa Miniear

PE Department Chair, Franklin High School

Indianapolis, Indiana

“Lisa is the mainstay of our township’s wellness initiative. While she has done the lion’s share of organizing and publicizing programs, she is equally passionate about getting others involved. She realized early on that the initiative would have a better chance of success if it was the work of many individuals, not just of one person per school.”

—Cindy Huffman, district wellness committee member

As chairperson of the district wellness committee and the physical education department chair at Franklin Central High School, Lisa Miniear works tirelessly to bring more physical activity and better nutrition to staff and students in all 12 district schools. Miniear was instrumental in securing a three-year, \$120,000 grant that enabled the district wellness committee to start and sustain staff walking initiatives, community fitness sessions and student running programs.

Miniear was a fierce advocate of wellness efforts even before the district became involved with the Healthy Schools Program. When the local high school underwent a major reconstruction, she proposed that the new school include a fitness area that would be open to the entire community. This year, Miniear was one of a group of five Indiana PE teachers appointed to help revise physical education standards for the state. She also helped implement an afterschool fitness program to help prevent obesity and worked with food service staff to incorporate healthier offerings in the school cafeteria, such as one percent milk replacing two percent milk and a weekly tuna fish option.

For her determination to bring healthy changes and her skills in overcoming barriers and turning adversaries into advocates for wellness, we are pleased to present Lisa Miniear with the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

Dominick Palma, Ph.D.

Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum and Student Services, West Babylon Schools

West Babylon, New York

“Dr. Palma is a master at achieving buy-in from the community, whether by recruiting staff members to take leadership roles on school wellness committees or meeting with stakeholders including parent organizations, district leaders and food service staff.”

—Anthony Cacciola, Superintendent, West Babylon School District

With Dr. Dominick Palma leading the charge, the West Babylon School District has made tremendous strides toward making its schools healthier places to learn and to work. Dr. Palma’s passionate support of wellness initiatives won over his colleagues, enabling him to clear administrative barriers to change and make wellness a priority for the district. As the chairperson of the district wide wellness committee, Dr. Palma secured a vital budget line devoted to wellness activities. He wrote a Safe Routes to School grant that resulted in a \$434,000 award to the district and town government that paid for new sidewalks and bicycles as well as walking and riding to school activities.

Dr. Palma recognized that he had a large talent pool of individuals at all levels throughout the district who were interested in working on wellness goals and he made every effort to connect, motivate and encourage them to carry out their ideas. He has been especially successful at getting the most from teachers and district staff. He nurtured the school-based wellness committees and encouraged them to cross-pollinate ideas between schools. He assisted the Director of Physical Education in efforts to expand the obesity at-risk program and worked with the Food Service Director and staff to improve the offerings in the school cafeteria. Dr. Palma is determined to continue to improve and expand wellness programs. Next year, he would like to create a coordinated program of employee wellness that reaches all staff members and reflects “best practices” from each school. Other plans include instituting a student ambassador program comprised of students at all grade levels who will become the driving force for additional healthy changes.

For his ability to connect multiple entities, and to persuade, inspire and lead, Dr. Dominick Palma is a deserving recipient of the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

Anita Schroeder, M.Ed.

Principal, Park Elementary School

Tulsa, Oklahoma

“The employee wellness programs that Principal Schroeder implemented have provided much more than just wellness. They have also fostered a sense of teamwork and have been a source of fun and stress reduction, especially during state testing periods. These were unexpected outcomes that pleasantly surprised the staff.”

—Lisa Griffin, Child Nutrition Coordinator, Tulsa Public Schools

By integrating physical activity and nutrition education into existing school programs wherever possible, Principal Anita Schroeder has been able to achieve impressive gains in school wellness. Park Elementary students participate in a program called “MicroSociety” that teaches budgeting, economics and organizational skills through a student-run school store. Schroeder added a wellness component to the program by using two district wellness grants to purchase a Wii Fit system and to stock the student store with healthy snack foods. Students now use their MicroSociety “dollars” to purchase healthy snacks and buy time on the Wii Fit system.

To achieve her goal of making Park Elementary a healthier school, Schroeder makes sure there are a myriad of opportunities for students and staff to get active. In addition to participating in a 50-minute physical education class at least three days per week, students can join a walking club that walks before school (weather permitting) and participate in community races and jog-a-thons, as well as school-sponsored track-and-field days. Based on the results of their school employee wellness survey, Park Elementary created innovative twice-weekly staff wellness programs that include options like a belly dancing class, a walking club and stress reduction workshops. Staff also has access to the Wii Fit system. A majority of staff now participates in some type of wellness activity, and the program is considered a model for other schools in the district.

To bring the message of healthy eating and active living to the entire school community, Schroeder is working with Park’s PTA to provide healthier alternatives for fundraiser activities and class celebrations. In conjunction with the district’s Child Nutrition Department, she has made changes to the school cafeteria, bringing them in line with Healthy Schools Program guidelines and is also eliminating vending machines for students.

For encouraging her school community to make the kinds of healthy changes that lead to healthier futures, Anita Schroeder is a deserving recipient of the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Champion**

Jacob Weiers, MS

Physical Education Teacher, Liberty Point Elementary School

Union City, Georgia

“Mr. Weiers divided the wellness team into sub-groups to match the eight categories of the Alliance Framework. Within each subgroup there was a chairperson assigned. Knowing that implementing change requires buy-in of the individuals targeted for change, he motivated the group and the change spread like wildfire throughout the school.”

—Dr. Vanessa O. Johnson, Principal, Liberty Point Elementary

In his 13-year career as a physical education instructor, Jacob Weiers has embraced the idea of using physical activity to increase student achievement. Believing that physically active kids are better prepared for learning and have fewer disciplinary problems, he instituted a daily before school physical activity session for all students that helped lead to fewer disciplinary referrals to the office. The school's principal anticipates improved test scores as well. Weiers took a leadership role in writing a school wellness plan and recruited 16 staff members to join the wellness team. Throughout the school year, the team promotes healthy eating and physical activity to the entire school community. One of their most successful events was “Family Fitness Night,” in which parents learned about healthy eating and discovered physical activities they could enjoy with their kids.

Liberty Point feels it has been transformed. Students participate in Kilometer Kids, an after-school running program sponsored by the Atlanta Track Club. Teachers have started a walking club and faculty and staff participated in the “Relay for Life,” raising \$2,300. Weiers used grant money to buy exercise equipment that gives students and staff yet another option for physical activity. Recognizing that healthy eating and physical activity go hand in hand, he also worked with the district's Nutrition Department to modify the school's cafeteria menus and encouraged the principal to remove unhealthy snacks and sodas from the teachers' lounge.

For his continued efforts to create active school environments for faculty, staff and parents, we present Jacob Weiers with the Healthy Schools Program Champion Award.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Albert Turner Senior Elementary School

Perry County
Marion, Alabama

Albert Turner Elementary is located in a very rural district with limited access to major medical care or physical rehabilitation services. When two employees became injured, Principal Edwin Dial Jr. decided he wanted to do something to help school staff improve their overall fitness. He purchased several pieces of exercise equipment for use at the school. Since that time, the district formed a wellness council and the program has continued to grow to help all school staff meet their fitness goals.

Staff now comes together after school to use the exercise equipment which includes a treadmill, stationary bike, workout bench, step bench, stability ball, medicine ball, elliptical machine and free weights. According to Ellen Essick, school employee wellness manager with the Healthy Schools Program, "With budget concerns across the country, cutting costs in individual school districts becomes essential. A small investment of providing staff with a space to exercise with efficiently functioning equipment can create an immeasurable return of lowered absenteeism, increased staff morale and hopefully down the road, lowered insurance costs."

This program has inspired several staff members to join the Scale Back Alabama challenge, a statewide campaign held the first of each year to encourage Alabamians to get healthier by losing weight and exercising.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Francis Marion High School

Perry County
Marion, Alabama

For Francis Marion High, improving school employee wellness became a successful venture during their first year of participation in the Healthy Schools Program. Completing the staff wellness interest survey helped them map out four distinct programs to help their staff adopt healthier lifestyle behaviors over the course of the year.

The first program was called “A New Leaf: Choices for Healthy Living.” This was a structured nutrition, physical activity and assessment program offered through Sowing Seeds of Hope and the Alabama Cooperative Extension once a week after school for one hour. The second program was a walking and exercise program offered in the library. Faculty could come during their planning period or after school to participate.

The third program was one that is offered once a year through the Public Education Employees’ Health Insurance Plan and the Alabama Department of Public Health. The program offers a risk factor assessment along with a personal health plan and referrals to appropriate medical providers if necessary. They conducted a fourth program called “Vital Signs Check” where staff and faculty could have their blood pressure and BMI tested by the school nurse or a health sciences student or instructor. Next year the wellness council plans to add the American Heart Association’s “Start” program to their list of options.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Robert C. Hatch High School

Perry County
Uniontown, Alabama

Healthier teachers will lead to healthier students. That is what the school wellness council at Robert C. Hatch High School firmly believes. School administrators say that although it can be hard to convince teachers to find the time in their busy schedules to exercise and take care of themselves, the concept of wellness is of great interest to everyone.

“The teachers are more interested in practicing healthier lifestyle behaviors. They recognize the significance of feeling better mentally and physically,” said Syreeta Herrion, physical education and health teacher.

This year the wellness council partnered with the public health department to hold a health-screening event for staff and faculty. Available screenings included height, weight, blood pressure, bone density, blood sugar and cholesterol testing. They plan on making this an annual event and look forward to continuing to help staff and faculty get more interested in their personal health so that they will set a strong example for their students.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Uniontown Elementary School

Perry County
Uniontown, Alabama

When visitors come to Uniontown they are surprised that the school has done away with all vending machines. According to school counselor, Debra Leonard, she just smiles and says, "If you take it, they will come." She goes on to explain that despite initial reactions that may not all be positive, replacing unhealthy snacks with healthier options will help staff and students eventually come to believe in adopting a healthier lifestyle.

While the majority of staff agreed right away that removing the unhealthy items was the right thing to do, according to Leonard, "The first reaction from the rest appeared to be righteous indignation- some declared complete anarchy and rebellion would result!" Some staff members initially complained about the baked chips now served in the cafeteria but after a few months they heard comments such as, "You know, those baked chips are not that bad," and "I bought some of the whole grain chips and served them at home- my kids actually liked them!"

Teachers have commented that students are using the water fountains more often at school. This is happening because students no longer have other options to choose from but also because they are seeing their teachers bring more water from home. Many teachers have also started to lose weight as a result of the reduced intake of sodas and vending machine snacks. The teachers have embraced their position as healthy role models and everyone at Uniontown, students and staff, are healthier as a result.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

West Valley High School

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

Fairbanks, Alaska

West Valley High School recognized that as a school located in one of the most northern areas of civilization, they need to take extra steps to make sure that students and staff have enough opportunities to stay active in often extreme conditions. They believe that staying healthy is the first line of defense in fighting off the sluggishness of their long, dark winters.

They have chosen to make the most of their environment by providing numerous activities for everyone to enjoy, inside and out. Students learn to snowshoe, use GPS systems, and build ice huts on an "Outdoor Activities" course. These activities are part of a PE curriculum that offers a wide variety of activities for freshmen to make their first high school PE experience fun and non-threatening. West Valley students also use the weight training room after hours where facilities are staffed to allow greater access, and more than 200 students play lunchtime intramurals and participate in mini-competitions and tournaments.

Staff formed walking groups, cross-country skied and worked out in the weight room with students. Staff luncheons now serve healthier options such as soup, breads and salad. Non-fat frozen juice bars, granola bars and popcorn have replaced muffins, doughnuts and sweets at staff meetings. West Valley's principal, Shaun Kraska, along with many staff, parents and students, has embraced the notion of creating a healthier school and believes strongly in the connection between wellness and school success.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Kodiak High School

Kodiak Island Borough School District

Kodiak, Alaska

Health and wellness is a priority for Kodiak Island Borough School District, located on the second largest island in the United States. The district of 13 schools has recently hired Wendy Van Curen, the first full-time district level wellness coordinator to address the health, fitness, nutrition and overall wellness of the Kodiak students and staff. "School is a place to learn, to teach, to be active and to be safe," Van Curen said. "Health, nutrition and fitness are important components to student and staff success."

Shortly after getting started in her position, Van Curen enrolled Kodiak schools in the Healthy Schools Program. She presented the program to the school board, the superintendent and other district employees. She worked to build school wellness councils and to learn the successes and challenges each school faces in creating a healthy school environment. She found support from many principals, school nurses, teachers, students and PTA members. She met with the nutrition program staff to learn how the school meals program is working to offer more whole grains, salads and low-fat products to improve the nutrition of staff and students. Van Curen loves interacting with students, staff and administrators in order to make wellness fun, educational and a lifetime practice.

Kodiak High School surveyed students to see what they were throwing away from their school lunches and what they would like to see. After analyzing the results, the wellness council moved to remove the soda machines, reduce the size of juices being sold to 10 ounces and turned off the espresso machine.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Ella P. Melbourne Elementary School

ABC Unified
Lakewood, California

From the birthday celebrations to exercise programs to nutrition workshops, parents and school faculty at Ella P. Melbourne Elementary agree that parents are crucial in efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. Together they are implementing school policies that lead to healthier eating and increased physical activity.

Through the efforts of the parents on the school wellness council, a new policy was developed regarding birthday celebrations. Previously it was the norm to bring in cake, punch and chips for every birthday. The new policy restricts sending in junk food and provides a list of approved foods for celebrations which includes fruit, vegetables, low-fat cheese, yogurt, pretzels or popcorn. Parents are also encouraged to send non-food items such as stickers, pencils or crayons. The school received no objections when the new policy was implemented and teachers are regularly receiving healthy recipe ideas for classroom parties from the parents.

Parents were also invited to join weekly parent exercise classes. The school partnered with the district's adult school and was able to offer aerobics, Pilates and yoga. They hope that if the parents learn the importance of daily exercise and enjoy it they will pass on their enthusiasm to their children.

Ella P. Melbourne Elementary also hosted a few nutrition education courses for parents which focused on how making small changes in what they purchase and prepare can make a big difference. Parents participated in an activity where they measured out the sugar content of many of the common drinks they give to their children.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Fremont Elementary School

Alhambra Unified
Alhambra, California

Fremont Elementary has a lot to celebrate this summer. They are currently in first place in the California Governor's Challenge Program out of 232 schools participating in the Los Angeles area. They have managed to maintain a participation rate of 100%! The Governor's Challenge is an annual contest among K-12 schools that encourages students, teachers and parents to be physically active. Efforts toward the Governor's Challenge also contributed to Fremont Elementary attaining the Bronze National Recognition Award with the Healthy Schools Program.

Students are turning in their monthly activity logs, becoming more active in afterschool activities and participating in a running club. Claudia Ramos, Fremont's Governor's Challenge coordinator, has noticed that students are more active, making better food choices and having a more positive attitude towards a healthier lifestyle.

The Governor's Challenge is just one way that is helping staff and students move more and eat healthier foods. Teachers participate in the Network for a Healthy California's Harvest of the Month program which provides teachers with opportunities to promote healthy eating through staff development, classroom cooking and school gardening projects. The teachers have even traded in ice cream parties for yogurt, granola and fruit parties!

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Ramona Elementary School

Alhambra Unified
Alhambra, California

If a small salad is good then it stands to reason that a big salad would be even better! This is what the Ramona school wellness council set out to show when it held a school-wide event called “Oh Snap, Pass the Peas Please!” The event brought many community resources to the school such as the American Heart Association, Dairy Council of CA and the Alhambra Unified School District Food Service to help students assemble a truly gigantic salad full of fresh vegetables and, of course, snap peas!

Students are being exposed to new fruits and vegetables through the Network for a Healthy California's Harvest of the Month program. This program provides fruits and vegetables to classrooms to allow students to try new foods they may not be familiar with. They also provide lesson plans for teachers to help them promote the new foods and good, healthy eating habits. The school garden continues to grow as more and more classrooms adopt garden plots, creating outdoor learning opportunities for students. They have planted trees and created sitting areas so that students can enjoy the garden as they learn about where their food comes from.

Next year the wellness council hopes to incorporate more physical activity into staff meetings by using JAMmin' Minutes. They also want to work closely with the PTA and student council to brainstorm healthier fundraising options.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Cesar Chavez Middle School

Lynwood Unified
Lynwood, California

Improving the school meals program has been a positive focus for César Chavez Middle School and the Lynwood Unified School District. All food items offered now derive 30% or less of calories from fats and are 100% free of trans-fat. Fresh fruits are served regularly in addition to a new salad bar. Food service staff is incorporating more lean meats into the entrees and are offering fewer items with high amounts of sodium or sugar.

The wellness council is now turning their efforts to adopting more of the Healthy Schools Program criteria in the areas of physical and health education. The council, which consists of parents, students and staff, is actively engaged in improving the schools' wellness policy and looking for ways to add more physical activity opportunities to the school day. They are also currently working to adopt the Alliance's Beverage Guidelines and remove all beverages other than water and 100% juice.

Last fall students and staff welcomed Congresswoman Linda Sanchez to their school who joined them for a pep rally to introduce the school's new wellness program. Sanchez, after sharing her own story about struggling with weight issues, said she was glad to see the school district taking the initiative to educate its students on nutrition and offer healthier school meal options.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Plainfield Central Middle School

Plainfield

Plainfield, Connecticut

One of the biggest changes that has taken place at Plainfield Central can be seen in the cafeteria. Students and staff used to have a snack area where they could choose from many unhealthy a la carte items. They have done away with that and now there is just a snack rack filled with healthy choices in the lunch line. They have also added a daily sandwich bar where they can choose a sandwich, either on a wrap or on whole wheat bread. The school guidance counselor said, "Since the healthier changes occurred this year in the cafeteria, I actually purchase my lunch at school!"

After surveying their colleagues, the school wellness council began providing a yoga class for teachers, taught by a community volunteer. School staff now participate in a regular aerobics class, offered at a discounted rate within the school, as well as a walking club. "Everyone loves the fitness classes we offer. The students get a kick out of seeing their teachers exercise," said teacher Karen Clark.

The school also has a student wellness committee which has become more and more active. This year they developed a fundraiser for Halloween to promote physical activity rather than sell candy. They have also worked with the physical education teacher to promote a "Be Fit Challenge," for the school community. Next year the school wellness council plans to launch a morning walk where everyone in the school community will walk together every day for ten minutes before starting the day.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Plainfield Memorial School

Plainfield

Plainfield, Connecticut

Students at Plainfield Memorial and neighboring Plainfield Central Middle School recently took on a challenge to walk 28 million steps (the distance it would take to cross the United States) collectively by the last day of school. They launched the challenge with a rally and ceremonial walk led by Robert Sweetgall, a champion of school walking programs, who has walked across the country seven times.

The school district provided each student with a pedometer to track the number of steps taken every day including a 10-minute walk that everyone participates in every morning before starting the school day. Superintendent of Schools Mary Conway said, "It's going to hopefully produce some really great results in the classrooms because healthy, fit kids make better students."

Next year they plan to start another program which will require each student to walk 100 miles during the school year. The administration supports the addition of the walking program as do students and staff. One staff member shared, "Having the opportunity to fit some physical activity into my hectic day, right here at work, has been such a motivator for me."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Gainesville High School

Alachua County School District

Gainesville, Florida

A partnership formed between students enrolled in the University of Florida's graduate and undergraduate dietetics programs and Gainesville High School students, administrators, faculty and staff provided the perfect opportunity to assess the high school's environment and to implement changes to create a healthier school. The partnership resulted in improvements in each of the eight content areas of the Healthy Schools Program and helped them satisfy the requirements for the Bronze recognition award.

The team used the Healthy Schools Inventory as the foundation for the needs assessment they conducted at the school. They also gathered input from Gainesville students, faculty and staff as well as members of the School Board of Alachua County and the Alachua County School Food Service department. Based on the thorough assessment they identified potential intervention strategies for each area and divided into five teams (Policy/Systems, School Meals, Health Education, Physical Education/Activity and Employee Wellness), with a UF graduate student taking the lead of each team. Each team was responsible for developing and implementing strategies to meet the HSP criteria, as well as developing a budget and securing financial support as necessary.

With such an organized and qualified team in place the school saw rapid changes in their environment. The Policy/Systems team expanded the wellness council, changed their fundraising policies and improved the aesthetics of the cafeteria. The School Meals team developed and delivered trainings on reducing fat and sodium for food service staff. The Physical Activity team added before and afterschool fitness programs, as well as a safe walking/biking to school program. Many more changes have also been realized, thanks to this unique school/community collaborative effort.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

American Senior High School

Dade County
Hialeah, Florida

The success of American Senior High School's school employee health and wellness initiative is best exemplified by cafeteria manager Shawna Collins. When physical education teacher Rossana Lopez helped their school wellness council launch a six-week wellness program they had no idea what sort of transformation was in store for one of their colleagues.

Towards the end of the 2007-2008 school year a number of teachers attended a workshop on stress management hosted by the physical education department. After learning more about how stress can affect their health, eight teachers decided to start an afterschool exercise club for employees. They had a successful run for six weeks but then summer break came.

The summer away did not deter Collins though; six weeks was enough for her to catch the fitness bug. When school resumed in the fall Collins approached the physical education department and asked for help in losing additional weight. The department chair talked with her about making healthier food choices and the benefits of regular exercise. She took the advice to heart and began spending one hour a day on the treadmill in the school fitness room. She has lost close to 90 pounds this school year and she is still going!

As is the goal with school employee wellness programs, Collins has inspired other staff and teachers including her own team of food service employees who often join her now on daily walks.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Bent Tree Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

In many cases, small steps are the key to success. Many schools find that by moving slowly and making sure that everyone is on board at every step, they can build momentum without turning off those who fear change happening too quickly. This was the approach that Bent Tree Elementary took during their first year participating in the Healthy Schools Program. They believe that the small changes made this year will “pave the way for a healthier staff and student body.”

One of the first things the wellness council set out to achieve was translating the breakfast and lunch menus into Spanish and posting the bilingual menus on the school website. The cafeteria manager began to order and serve foods that meet the Alliance’s guidelines. The school nurse measured the BMI of students and referred them to a pediatrician for evaluation if they fell into the at-risk category or above. The council plans to create a fitness lab this fall for staff to use to help them reduce stress and stay active.

During the school year, teachers integrated nutrition lessons that focused on the importance of healthy eating habits into the science curriculum. During career day, professionals from health fields were invited to speak to the students about the importance of healthy eating habits and physical activity. Maria Zabala, third grade teacher, said, “We learned that adults and children are willing to make healthier choices when provided with the opportunity.”

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Blue Lakes Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

Sore muscles are just what the teachers at Blue Lakes Elementary were hoping to experience when their wellness council organized a staff boot camp as part of their employee wellness efforts. Although many had not engaged in much physical activity since high school, some New Year's resolutions and raised awareness of the importance of health and wellness to the learning environment prompted them to look into ways to help them start living healthier lives.

Twelve teachers joined together to start the boot camp program back in January of this year. They recruited two parents who are also personal trainers to come out three days a week after school to "whip them into shape." They all pitched in to cover the cost. Rachel Justiano said, "I look forward to every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday because I get to spend time with my fellow coworkers and we do something good for ourselves. We're so proud of each other."

The wellness council also started the "Blue Lakes Walks" program where classes take time each week to go outside to walk. Teachers were hesitant at first to take more time away from the classroom but since giving it a try, they have received very positive feedback. This year they also tried to encourage students to come eat breakfast at the school during School Breakfast Week. Those who came every day for a week were eligible for prizes and the end result was that over 300 students attended each day!

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Calusa Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

The school wellness council at Calusa Elementary is most proud of the employee wellness program they were able to get off the ground this year. They followed the important steps outlined in the Healthy Schools Program Framework for conducting a staff wellness interest survey, analyzing the results and then developing a program based on the interests and needs of potential participants.

The council discovered that many teachers were interested in an on-campus fitness program that included elements of relaxation and aerobic exercise. The wellness council then started to search for instructors and equipment. They were able to purchase yoga mats, medicine balls, free weights, elastic bands and a few instructional videos. The members found instructors to teach yoga and tae-bo once a week. Other teachers then stepped up to supplement those classes with weekly upper and lower-body conditioning classes. They use a Zumba instructional video and a video to use with the medicine balls.

The wellness council created a calendar, sign-up sheets and flyers for the teachers' mailboxes. They posted the calendar on the school website and started sharing news about the program during the morning announcements. Approximately sixteen staff members have regularly joined the classes. They plan to charge participants \$20 next year to help cover the costs of the instructors and incentives.

The wellness council is thrilled that teachers are sharing their experiences with each other and talking about how great (or on some days- how sore!) they feel. It is clear to all that the program is a success and they look forward to rolling it out again in the fall.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Edison Park Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

Edison Park Elementary has not had a playground for the past six years and may have to wait a few more years until it receives one as part of the district wide improvement plan. Rather than continue to wait for playground equipment, the school wellness council decided it was time to get creative. They had what some would view as a tall order to fill- they wanted their students to be able to receive high intensity exercise in a short time period that was fun, safe and affordable to create.

Fortunately, they found just the resource were looking for- playground stencils! The stencils are created by a company that put a new twist on the well-known game of hopscotch by creating new designs to appeal to today's students. Edison Park ordered a collection of stencils including a fruit/veggie hop, watermelon agility hop, checkerboard and a pirate's treasure map. Faculty received training on the safe use of playground stenciled play areas. The stencils are designed to be reusable and can be easily stored so Edison Park is able to share them with a community partner, the Athalie Range Park in Miami, and the various before and afterschool programs at Edison Park Elementary. Sharon Mason, the park manager at Athalie Range said, "These stencils look great! I look forward to using them during my summer camp programs." The playground stencils have recently been added to the Healthy Schools Program Resource Database.

Edison Park also took the bold step of moving away from using pizza parties to reward students for reaching their academic progress goals and instead host Wii parties where students get to run virtual challenge races, do aerobics and play exer-games. The Principal even issued a Wii boxing challenge to students! Jackie Mulloy House, adapted physical education teacher, said, "The students were very enthusiastic in their participation of the Wii games. They took turns graciously, demonstrated good sportsmanship and cheered on their classmates."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Gertrude K. Edleman/Sabal Palm Elementary School

Dade County

North Miami Beach, Florida

Gertrude K. Edelman/Sabal Palm hopes to “greatly reduce the problem of child obesity.” Their strategy is a multi-faceted approach that includes afterschool activity programs, walking programs, classroom nutrition education, serving healthy food in the cafeteria and increasing parent awareness on healthy food choices.

The school started by developing their school wellness council and conducting a staff wellness interest survey. Based on these results they created a school employee wellness action plan. They decided to start a weekly fitness and walking program and created guidelines and incentives to join.

The school nurse also attended a grant-writing workshop and wrote a grant to develop a program called YEAH (Young, Energetic, Active, Healthy Fitness Program). This program is designed to help at-risk students as well as staff by providing health screenings and a personal trainer to help them set and reach personal fitness goals.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Herbert A. Ammons Middle School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

Staff at Herbert A. Ammons Middle School clearly showed they were interested in improving their health and fitness levels when 70% indicated that they would like to participate in a staff wellness program. It was determined that the staff wanted a program they could participate in on campus after school.

Since that time, the wellness council started a walking/running club as well as yoga classes. The walking/running club meets at the park adjacent to the school for stretching and warm-up exercises. The participants keep weekly logs of their miles/steps completed and set goals to improve each week. Guidance counselor Ronda Carey said, "It was great to keep up with my steps and know that I accomplished my goal by seeing how many steps I completed each day." As a culminating activity for the club, a number of members decided to join in a local 5K race at the end of the year.

The staff also expressed an interest in doing yoga so a teacher was hired to offer a weekly class at the school. Science teacher Liana Roche said, "I so look forward to getting together with staff and learning something new in yoga class." There was such an overwhelming response from the school staff that the rest of the community began to take notice and wanted to be included! Information on the yoga class was distributed through the PTSA e-mail tree and several parents have since joined the class.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Mae M. Walters Elementary School

Dade County
Hialeah, Florida

School administrators and parents have come together to improve snacks and fundraisers at Mae M. Walters. For years students participated in weekly pizza sales. This year everyone decided that a healthy change was necessary and that students needed to have healthier choices available. Now the pizza sale is held once a month, with whole grain pizza. The monthly ice cream sale offers sugar-free ice cream. An additional monthly snack sale only offers items such as fruit, raisins, yogurt and low-fat string cheese. According to the PTA Treasurer, "Our students began to eat things they were not used to...healthy things! Next year we will look for more items to include at these sales!"

Students are also "Fueling Up to Play" by participating in a national program of that name. The program is a collaboration between the National Football League, the National Dairy Council and the local Dairy Council. The program encourages students to "get up and play" for 60 minutes a day and to "fuel up" with the right foods - low-fat and fat-free dairy products, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Teachers are also getting involved and, after attending a few in-service workshops on wellness, started suggesting fitness ideas to implement in the upcoming school year such as a dance club, walking/running group and jazzercise classes. They believe that by doing activities together, teachers will find more support and encouragement to make permanent changes in their daily routines.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Melrose Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

One of the top priorities for the school wellness council at Melrose Elementary was to ensure that the council was representative of the student population and included students and family members. The student population at Melrose is from predominantly Spanish speaking countries and the wellness council members now represent that fact.

The action plan included adding updates from the school wellness council to the PTA agenda and seeking student input on school wellness initiatives. They asked the school nurse to provide health education lessons for the 4th and 5th graders. They also recognized the need for a strong school employee wellness action plan. After completing the staff wellness needs assessment they created an action plan that addresses physical activity, weight and stress management, health screenings and tobacco cessation.

The wellness council removed foods served in the employee lounge that did not comply with the Alliance Competitive Foods and Beverage Guidelines for high school students. All foods available to students outside of the school meals program are also now in compliance with the Guidelines. The wellness council also recognized that there was a need for professional development opportunities for people working in the afterschool care programs and that was reflected in their action plan. They also worked together to create an annual plan for integrating physical activity into most subject areas and to ensure that at least 20 minutes of recess is offered to students every day.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

North Miami Elementary School

Dade County
North Miami, Florida

Members of the wellness council at North Miami felt that it was important to start their wellness program by focusing on school employee wellness. They felt that the staff needed to set a good example for the students and other staff members. After conducting the school wellness interest survey they decided to start a fitness club.

The group started walking together twice a week after school. At first they only had five people but they were able to “tease and pester” more into joining. After the holidays the council wanted to add additional variety and encouragement. Staff members volunteered to start “Movement Mondays” where they lead other staff members in stretching, yoga or other exercise videos. About one third of the staff has been participating in the physical activities. In addition to having a nurse come to the school once a week for blood pressure checks, the wellness council created a water and healthy snack station for staff. They also used a local grant to purchase t-shirts, exercise mats, videos and pedometers to help encourage the staff to stay active.

Next year, the council hopes to start a vegetable garden where students will have an active role in growing and maintaining the plants, thus becoming more interested in eating the vegetables. They are also brainstorming ways to add fitness stations to the walking trail at a very low cost by borrowing equipment from the physical education department and recycling other pieces of equipment from the school.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Olympia Heights Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

Healthy Food Friday's at Olympia Heights are providing a fun way for staff to try new foods while increasing their fruit and vegetable consumption. The wellness council has reached out to a variety of vendors to help keep the food choices interesting and enjoyable. One staff member shared, "Last Friday we were able to choose from 30 or more different salads that were incredible! I never really thought that a boring salad could be made to taste so delicious!"

In addition to starting a walking club for staff, the wellness council provided guidance to transform the staff lounge into an inviting fitness center. They purchased stretch bands, free weights and medicine balls so teachers can stop in any time for a quick workout. They have observed that exercise has helped the staff stay alert and motivated and they are "passing on the spirit of fitness to the classroom, inspiring their students to live healthy."

To further send the important message of healthy living to the students the wellness council started sharing a weekly health tip over the morning announcements. They also created a monthly health and wellness calendar for students and staff. The calendar includes healthy events and activities such as the walking club and Weight Watchers meetings, in addition to other helpful tips and facts on health. The wellness council feels that all of these activities "have been instrumental in building a foundation for healthy lifestyles."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Royal Green Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

After conducting their staff interest survey the wellness council determined that staff was most interested in three separate areas: cardio and strength training, healthy cooking and meal planning, and information on heart disease, stroke and stress management. They came up with five major goals for their action plan to address the staff interests.

The first was a walking club. The wellness council found a faculty member who volunteered to start the club and recruited other teachers to walk three times a week during lunch or after school. The PE teacher decided that students and staff also needed more physical activity opportunities during the day so she started leading a series of simple stretches and exercises during the morning announcements three times a week.

Next, they held a "Taste Test Time," during a faculty meeting so that everyone could sample a healthy snack. One of the wellness council members prepared a small fruit smoothie for every teacher at the meeting. Teachers were encouraged to bring in samples of healthy recipes to share. They plan to continue the healthy snacks during faculty meetings next year. They will also bring in speakers from the health department to talk to staff about health and fitness issues.

Next year the wellness council plans on offering incentives for staff to join the walking and strength clubs. They plan to hold a weight loss challenge from October through May with prizes for those who reduce their weight to a healthy level.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Scott Lake Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

Staff and administrators at Scott Lake are committed to their theme for the year, “The Scott Lake Family is academically and physically fit.” They have started doing a school wide “Energy Burst” session daily during the morning announcements. The principal wrote a chant with movements about the school, and students and staff enjoy doing that together each morning. Every Friday they kick off the weekend with a “Fine Friday” walk where they all walk together for ten minutes before the school day ends.

The staff is also committed to working to improve their own health. Fourteen members participated in the Weight Watchers at Work® program and lost a total of 168 pounds over twelve weeks.

They are now starting an afterschool fitness program for staff, taught by a staff member. To demonstrate this strong commitment to health and wellness to the community the staff joined together for a staff “Fitness Parade.” They walked and chanted around the school and through the community where parents and other community members cheered them on.

Students are also bringing healthier snacks to school as part of the “Drop Everything and Eat Healthy Snacks,” program. One third grader shared that her class is following the alphabet and they try to bring in healthy snacks that correspond to a certain letter. She said, “I go online to find different kinds of fruit to bring and then I can go to the store to buy them.”

Success Story **Bronze Award**

South Pointe Elementary School

Dade County
Miami Beach, Florida

The area that the wellness council at South Pointe feels has improved the most since they joined the Healthy Schools Program is parental involvement. The PTA is making a conscious effort to improve the items used for fundraisers. They organized an art project to decorate chairs that were sold at an auction. They are organizing a “Fresh Market” where they will sell fruits, vegetables, smoothies and used books. They will also have environmental activities, a free yoga class and booths for local businesses to promote healthy items.

The school is also giving back to the parent community by realizing that they needed more information on healthy living. They have filled their school website with information on childhood obesity, recommended physical activity levels for children, healthy food suggestions and information on asthma and weight management. Each teacher has space on the website to share with parents what they are working on in the classroom as well.

Parents have also taken an active role in the staff wellness program. They found parents who are certified fitness instructors who are now teaching a Tai Chi class once a week as well as a fitness training class that meets twice a week. Teachers pay a small fee to participate but appreciate that they do not have to leave the school campus. Next year they are also starting a yoga class which will be offered free of charge since the PTA found local yoga instructors who are willing to donate their time. The school will be providing free yoga mats as an incentive for teachers to join.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Toussaint Louverture Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

With budget cuts and rising demands on school faculty across the country, some teachers are realizing how important it is to find effective stress reduction techniques. At Toussaint, teachers are making their own health a top priority and have started to come together twice a week to get moving. They are seeing how physical activity can have a positive effect on both the body and the mind.

The school wellness council first surveyed their fellow staff members to assess barriers and interest in offering physical activity opportunities for the staff. They found that demand was high for physical activity opportunities they could do as a group and started meeting twice a week after school. Using exercise videos to keep things interesting, staff members are trying different activities such as walking and kickboxing and they plan to add the Zumba dance program soon.

To keep costs low the group made their own hand weights, filling ½-liter water bottles with sand that weighed two pounds each. All members of the group are really enjoying the sense of accomplishment as well as the benefits of support and camaraderie. They are getting to know their colleagues on a new level and building strong relationships. When someone is unable to come, other group members let him or her know that they were missed. One staff member commented, "I felt so good yesterday when I went home, knowing I did something just for me."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

J.H. Workman Middle School

Escambia County

Pensacola, Florida

Participating in the Healthy Schools Program has helped the wellness council at J.H. Workman Middle School see that “changes that take place now will affect us for years to come.” With that in mind the team identified a number of changes they wanted to see this year and worked tirelessly to see them come to fruition.

One of the school’s major accomplishments was reinstating a school breakfast program after a seven year absence. The Department of Education Food Service Division came to the school to evaluate the program and suggested that the program increase the breakfast offerings to at least two choices. The school implemented this great idea and has since seen an increase in participation.

The food service staff also took the steps of eliminating all fried foods, making sure that half of all grains served daily are whole grains and serving at least one fruit at both breakfast and lunch. They replaced high-fat items on the a la carte line with low-fat snacks. All soft drinks and high calorie sports drinks have been replaced with bottled water. They are also offering a daily salad option with a low-fat dressing. To support these changes the food service staff conducted a marketing campaign aimed at promoting healthy foods, and worked to incorporate healthy eating messages into other subjects such as math and science.

J.H. Workman is looking forward to next year when they plan on kicking off a “Health Academy.” They will start to offer standalone health education classes for students which will explore personal health development as well as an exploration of careers in the health and culinary fields.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Woodham Middle School

Escambia County

Pensacola, Florida

A number of fun before school activities are helping to spread the message about eating well and moving more at Woodham Middle School. The school offers a healthy baking club once a week. Students meet in the home economics classroom to prepare a variety of low-fat or non-fat baked goods before school starts. They learn how to substitute ingredients in recipes such as using whole-wheat flour instead of bleached flour and applesauce instead of oil.

Another option is to join the before school fitness club which meets once a week in the gym. Students stretch and then head outside to the track where they walk or run laps in exchange for straws. When they receive four straws they are allowed to play dodge ball, touch football or other active games. When the weather is bad they stay inside the gym and run laps or up and down the bleachers. Students earn tickets which can be redeemed for prizes. The fitness club is open to both students and staff. The club averages 30 students and 7 faculty members each week.

Faculty and staff were also encouraged to participate in a walking challenge. They joined teams of five and each team was given color-coded pedometers. Each team member would pick up their pedometer at 8:00 am and return it no later than 4:45 pm. Steps taken by each team member were combined and recorded for the day. Over 50% of the staff participated in this fun challenge and they enjoyed the competitive aspect of it, not to mention the \$25 gas cards that were given out to the winning team!

Success Story **Bronze Award**

North Fort Myers High School

Lee County School District

Fort Myers, Florida

When school staff at North Fort Myers realized that they could not get students to the cafeteria in the morning for a much-needed healthy breakfast, they decided to bring the breakfast to the students. Linda Ellis, physical education teacher, and Kathleen Rose, school nurse, were concerned about the number students arriving at school without eating breakfast so they met with the cafeteria manager, Cynthia Matteo, to discuss the possibility of a breakfast program. They discovered that this had been a long time goal of Matteo's but the cafeteria was not available in the morning as it was being used for club meetings and there was no available student supervision as all of the teachers and administrators were assigned to other locations.

It was noted that school clubs were allowed to sell donuts in the morning at the bus ramp and an administrator was assigned to supervise students. The cafeteria manager asked for permission to send a breakfast cart to the bus ramp in the mornings and assigned one of her workers to manage it. With permission granted, the school wellness council started looking at selecting foods to offer for breakfast. They looked at what was available and compared items to the Healthy Schools Program school meals criteria before making their selections.

To promote the new program the wellness council posted a large banner above the breakfast cart. They asked the television production class to create promotional spots and they included information on electronic banners in the gym and in morning announcements. They recruited Brian Curls, the technology specialist on campus, to come up with a logo and name, The Red Knight Café. As they approached the FCAT (Florida's state education exam), Rose did a television spot on the importance of breakfast titled, "Do your best on the test!"

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Belcher Elementary School

Pinellas County School District

Clearwater, Florida

Belcher Elementary prides itself in always being ahead of the curve in implementing programs and projects that will benefit its students and sees itself as a leader. When other schools in the district moved to a block schedule which eliminated daily physical education, Belcher kept its daily physical education class, recognizing the importance of regular exercise to student learning.

Belcher's PE classes stress the importance of regular physical activity and the life-long enjoyment of sports. Teachers develop their own games to help ensure that games keep everyone moving and are less competitive. When they noticed that health education was suffering in order to teach more minutes of reading and math, the physical education teachers took the district and state health standards and created ways to address the standards through PE class.

Belcher has worked with the PTA to eliminate unhealthy foods from school parties on campus. They have also worked towards eliminating food oriented fundraisers. PTA parties now involve science shows, health education puppet shows and non-food rewards.

Over the last four years the school has put a larger emphasis on staff wellness. They have implemented a weight management program, walking programs and an afterschool fitness boot camp, in addition to bringing in speakers to talk about stress management and healthy living.

Joining the Healthy Schools Program is just one more example of Belcher's forward momentum and a logical next step to complementing their efforts to improve the health and wellness of their school community.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Safety Harbor Elementary School

Pinellas County School District

Safety Harbor, Florida

“The biggest lesson is how important and crucial health and wellness are to our lives. Our lives depend on it. Together, we can do it. When each one of us takes a step, together we can go a marathon. And, this journey is a marathon that we must run. We have just begun to take our first step.”

—Carol Carstensen, music specialist

Safety Harbor has found quite the wellness champion in Carol Carstensen, the music specialist who has been on her own journey towards health and wellness over the last few years. She has lost 60 pounds and is seen as an inspiration and a role model to other staff. She is dedicated to helping others become healthy so it made sense when the principal asked her to become their wellness “champion,” and to lead their wellness council in efforts to create a healthier school.

After completing their staff wellness interest survey they analyzed the results and incorporated the feedback into their plan for the year. They started by adding a salad bar for staff twice a week. Then they added an afterschool exercise class for staff. A dedicated core group attended the class which often inspired others to start working out more at home.

The school’s parent teacher organization has become very involved in their wellness efforts. The parents put on a skit at the talent show to promote the upcoming walk-a-thon. The PTA sponsored another event to highlight student wellness. The PE coaches led the line dancing and encouraged all families to stay in shape. The PTA has also moved its fundraising nights to a healthier restaurant that serves salads and soups instead of the standard fast food fare.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Burgess-Peterson Academy

Atlanta City

Atlanta, Georgia

“Working with a diverse Farm to School partner coalition and the Atlanta Public Schools, Burgess-Peterson has become a model school in Atlanta’s growing sustainable and local food movement,” said Betty Jackson, chair of the wellness council at the school. The council is very proud of how much they have accomplished in just one year.

It all started last fall when a representative from Georgia Organics attended a school wellness council meeting to talk about their Farm to School program. The council agreed to give it a shot and Jackson started to put the plan into action. Three teachers attended a Farm to School workshop to learn about compost, frost, beekeeping and irrigation of crops. They began to connect with other teachers across the state to develop lesson plans to teach students about the life cycle of plants.

Jackson and Burgess-Peterson Principal Robin Robbins attended a few local community association meetings to present the project and to ask for support. A number of members volunteered to help the school design and build the garden. The plans all came together one day in February when students, parents, staff and community members joined forces to build the gardens. Donated seeds and trees were donated. A year-round school has volunteered to maintain the garden over the summer.

According to Kate Link, competitive foods and beverage manager for the Alliance, “School gardens can provide great opportunities to teach children about nutrition and ‘cultivate’ their palates for fresh fruits and vegetables.” Jackson offers some practical advice for other schools who are interested in a school garden project, “Make sure that the wood and wood chips you use in your garden are termite free!”

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Morningside Elementary School

Atlanta City

Atlanta, Georgia

It began in the fall of 2007, when Morningside Elementary developed a pilot Farm to School program which encompasses garden-related curriculum, nutrition education and provides for more freshly prepared and desirable foods to be served in the cafeteria. The school first started a garden program for their kindergarten students. The students have worked in the garden and participated in a weekly garden-related lesson. Since that time, additional partnerships have developed with various community organizations to enable Morningside to expand the program.

The intent of the garden curriculum is to supplement classroom teaching with an outdoor classroom where math, science and social studies can be studied in a real life environment. The curriculum is also designed to support the wellness policy by teaching children about making healthy life choices for their bodies and the environment. Key partnerships include the nutrition department at Georgia State University. Professors, undergraduate and graduate students are currently working to identify and apply for grants to support the school's programs. These students are also compiling garden-related curriculum for each grade that will be tied to the Georgia Performance Standards and are helping to develop a strategic plan for evaluating the programs. They have also offered to help ensure that any changes made to the cafeteria menu will meet the minimum requirements of the USDA for the National School Lunch program.

Other partners include a local restaurant owner who is interested in helping fund the garden project through dining events, an employee volunteer base and donations. A local gardener is acting as a farm mentor, providing guidance and resources to help the school develop a successful garden.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Black's Mill Elementary School

Dawson County
Dawsonville, Georgia

“Our school is motivated and excited to move forward in raising the standards for health and wellness in our school,” said school nurse Leigh Ann Bagley. When Black’s Mill joined the Healthy Schools Program last year, they were quite pleased to see how many great things they already had in place to help support the health and wellness of their students and staff. The wellness council has appreciated the tools provided by the Healthy Schools Program which have helped them to assess their current status, set goals for improvement and help track their progress along the way.

Over the past few years, the food service staff has taken an active role in reducing the amount of fat and calories in the lunch program. The physical education program has taken great strides in offering more physical education classes. They are implementing the Georgia Performance Standards which include more health education curricula. Teachers at Black’s Mill are aware of the value of health education and physical activity, and they include these topics in the classroom setting. Students also have a chance to learn and share their knowledge about health related topics by presenting information during the school’s morning broadcasts.

Next year, the wellness council plans to continue programs already in place as well as take a closer look at how to incorporate physical activity and good nutrition during school fundraisers and celebrations. They will continue to encourage staff to serve as good role models for physical activity and healthy food choices. Bagley said, “Our ultimate goal is to raise awareness of the need for physical activity and good nutrition, thus empowering our young students to choose healthy habits that will carry them into adulthood.”

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Glen Haven Elementary School

Dekalb County
Decatur, Georgia

After just one year of participating in the Healthy Schools Program, the staff at Glen Haven Elementary School has seen drastic changes in student behavior and test scores. With strong support from their principal, a wellness council was created and the school started adding programs to help everyone move more and eat healthy.

Instead of the standard “JAMmin’ Minute” that many Healthy Schools Program schools have incorporated into their daily routines, Glen Haven decided to do “JAMmin’ Two Minutes,” every day after morning announcements. The “Bulldogs on the Move” program was designed to help teachers add more physical activity into the day. Twice a week teachers take their students outside for 12 extra minutes of walking, running, jumping or other movement. They have added a number of intramural activities such as flag football, basketball, a step team and cheerleading squad. In addition, once a month they host “What a Salad Wednesday,” where different grades take turns sponsoring a salad buffet for the staff.

Since starting the program, Glen Haven has seen a 17% increase in standardized test scores, a “huge” decrease in disciplinary actions and suspensions and a large increase in staff camaraderie.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

A. Philip Randolph Elementary School

Fulton County

Atlanta, Georgia

After the first meeting of the school wellness council, the group quickly accepted the charge of incorporating additional physical activity during the school day by creating a “Minute of Movement.” The physical activity breaks were shared with the school during the school-wide, student led news broadcast. Different classrooms and groups of staff members take turns creating exercise or dance routines and recording them. They play the same video every day for a week so that everyone has a chance to master it before moving on to the next. Students are even creating their own routines for staff to use during their monthly faculty meetings.

Students and staff are also eating healthier foods these days. The wellness council removed foods such as cupcakes, cookies and candy from the approved list of items for school celebrations and parents were asked to bring healthier foods. The school hosted a smoothie party for the students who sold the most calendars during the annual school fundraiser. The school meals have also received a healthy makeover by removing all fried items and replacing them with lower-fat options. Ice cream has been replaced with frozen fruit bars and white bread products have been replaced with whole wheat.

The school recognized the need for additional and ongoing professional development for their staff on how to incorporate wellness activities within the classroom. The district’s early release days (which offer four hours of professional development) were utilized to provide training and resources for staff on how to incorporate the nutrition and physical activity components of the wellness program in addition to time spent during faculty meetings and one system-wide workday.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Campbell Elementary School

Fulton County
Fairburn, Georgia

Organization seems to be the key to the success of the staff at Campbell Elementary with regard to their involvement with the Healthy Schools Program. The wellness council divided up into sub-committees, one for each Healthy Schools Program content area, and completed each section of the Inventory and prioritization charts accordingly. Then the sub-groups came back together to compare notes and create an effective action plan; they have been charging through their plan at top speed ever since.

Before school started last summer they analyzed the school menu and vending machine options and removed all items that did not meet the Alliance Guidelines. They felt that this was easier to do before the school year started, rather than trying to remove these foods during the school year. They also asked all staff and parents to model healthy behaviors and to only bring healthy foods to the school for lunch, class incentives and parties.

They replaced their fundraisers with non-food items such as gift wrap and other gift items rather than cookie dough and chocolates. And they substituted birthday cakes for birthday celebrations. Now, once a month, every student who celebrated a birthday in that month heads down to the gym for 45 minutes of fun physical activity. They play Dance, Dance Revolution and use scooters, jump-ropes and hula-hoops to celebrate together. Staff and parents are also getting active through the new staff wellness program and family fitness nights. One student shared, "I feel great about Campbell being a healthy school. It makes me feel good and I'll live a long time."

Campbell has taken a truly comprehensive and thorough approach to creating a healthier school environment.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Evoline C. West Elementary School

Fulton County
Fairburn, Georgia

The school wellness council at Evoline C. West Elementary set out to create a school environment low in sugar and high in activity this year. By partnering with Georgia Action for Healthy Kids as well as the Alliance's Healthy Schools Program, they were able to make significant changes that are helping students and staff move more and eat healthier foods.

Before starting a new physical activity program for students the school wanted to seek parent insights on what could be most successful so they hosted a family fitness night and surveyed the parents for their thoughts. After analyzing the responses they decided to start opening the gym earlier, at 7:20 am, every morning. That way students are able to come in early to run, jump rope and do other physical activities, getting them prepared for the day of learning. A grant they received helped purchase equipment such as hula-hoops, jump-ropes and a climbing wall.

Staff and faculty are also enjoying the school's climbing wall in addition to walking and doing aerobics together once a week after work. This program started after a staff wellness interest survey determined there was high interest in organizing a staff physical activity program.

The food service staff at Evoline C. West was also busy this year, substituting healthy choices for less-healthy alternatives in the cafeteria and vending machines. They worked closely with the Alliance to find a slushy beverage that met the Alliance's Guidelines and could be served to students. School fundraisers received a healthy makeover with a doughnut fundraiser being replaced with t-shirts and other food based fundraisers being replaced with calendars and special photos.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Frank McClarin High School

Fulton County
College Park, Georgia

Getting students active in promoting a healthy eating program was the key to success at Frank McClarin High. The wellness council found that changing the eating habits of teenagers is particularly challenging and admit that it was a struggle for them over the course of the first year of implementation. They hope to get even more students involved next year on the wellness council and that such efforts will lead to creating lasting, sustainable change in their school.

In addition to having students join the school wellness student council; the students also appeared on the school's daily morning show, delivering messages about healthy eating and physical activity to all of their peers and teachers. They also participated in numerous assemblies throughout the course of the year to share their positive experiences.

To keep the efforts moving ahead the wellness council conducted marketing campaigns to promote nutritious snacks. They required all students to take health and physical education and created opportunities for students to participate in physical activity breaks on a daily basis. They also created additional physical education electives for students to join.

Frank McClarin's faculty and staff also did their part by participating in workshops and professional development opportunities which promoted healthy schools. They also engaged in activities to promote their personal health such as Walk a Mile in My Shoes, Taste of McClarin, Wednesday Wellness Walks, circuit training and aerobics classes.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Liberty Point Elementary School

Fulton County
Union City, Georgia

By being a part of both the Alliance's Healthy Schools Program and Georgia Action for Healthy Kids, Liberty Point has found a plentitude of resources to help them meet their goals. They have also joined the Healthy Kids, Smart Kids Program which is helping them in their efforts to create a sugar-free school.

Liberty Point secured a grant through Georgia Action for Healthy Kids which was used to purchase more equipment for their physical education and afterschool programs. The additional equipment helped reduce wait time so that students can stay more active throughout the activity. The afterschool program has implemented the Recharge program, an Action for Healthy Kids resource designed to get students moving and to teach them about healthy eating. They are also participating in a program called Kilometer Kids through a partnership with the Atlanta Track Club. Students keep track of miles they run and earn prizes along the way. At the end of the season they receive a free pair of Nike shoes. Students are also coming to school early to play in the gym.

According to Jacob Weiers, physical education specialist, "Being part of the Alliance has taught us a lot about wellness, fitness and obesity. I think the greatest lesson we have learned is the need to work together and collaborate to succeed. Many students, staff and parents have made wellness a priority. Those changes came through the support of one another. We are not alone in this fight."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Palmetto Elementary School

Fulton County
Palmetto, Georgia

Excitement for the Healthy Schools Program in Palmetto is high. According to Kim Statzer, coordinator of the school wellness council, “What an exciting process and transformation this has been for our school! When invited to participate in this program we had no idea what it was going to entail. We embarked on a healthy journey that is changing not only our school climate, but also individual lives.”

This journey has been personal for Statzer as well who feels that spearheading this movement in her school has helped her lose over 45 pounds. “I knew that to be an effective leader of this program, I needed to be a role model. It is easy to champion a program like this when you are doing it successfully yourself.” Statzer and her wellness council are both finding success when it comes to meeting their goals.

The council decided to focus on three main goals this year: becoming a sugar-free environment, providing activity breaks for students throughout the day and offering opportunities for staff to become healthier. Statzer said that due to strong administrative support at the school and district level, making changes in the food environment happened practically overnight and with relative ease. Faculty received training on how to incorporate more physical activity into the classroom and how to model healthy behaviors. They also started a staff wellness program with donated exercise equipment, a weight-loss challenge and a walking competition.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Renaissance Elementary School

Fulton County
Fairburn, Georgia

For Darrell Lockett, chair of the Renaissance school wellness council, “Strategic planning was the key to having a successful program.” By implementing steps one at a time they have been able to experience a true “renaissance” of healthy school activities for their students and staff to enjoy.

The biggest change at Renaissance has been the staff intramural program which started in the fall of 2007 and has continued to grow in popularity and options. In under a year, the program grew from offering three intramural sports (volleyball, basketball and Frisbee golf) to ten different sports and physical activities that rotate throughout the year. In order to reach as many participants as possible the wellness council added less strenuous activities and individual activities such as a walking club and aerobics. They partnered with Weight Watchers and held meetings at the school with an aerobics class after the weekly meeting. This spring they hosted the first “Biggest Loser” contest.

Last year the wellness council began to explore the idea of becoming a sugar-free school environment. The wellness council worked with food service staff and other key players to remove sugar from the school meals program as well as the vending machines. They have replaced unhealthy snacks and beverages with healthier alternatives.

In November, they decided to start an afterschool intramural program for students. The wellness council wanted to give students an “avenue to learn basic athletic skills.” They hope that with more volunteers they can continue and expand the program next year.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Sandtown Middle School

Fulton County
Atlanta, Georgia

“Students had been quite accustomed to snacking throughout the school day. Vending machines, concession sales and fundraisers were quietly infiltrating and violating our youth of their optimal academic performance. An extreme makeover was needed.”

—Dr. Connie Reliford, 6th grade administrator

Reliford and the school wellness council had heard about Dr. Yvonne Butler’s efforts to create sugar-free schools throughout DeKalb County and they decided to join her in the crusade for healthier schools. Although they faced some initial resistance, staff and students quickly adapted to the changes after realizing that this would remain Sandtown’s permanent goal. The wellness team flooded the school with positive healthy messages, including Sugar-Free Zone reminders which offered creative and tasty alternatives to foods that are high in fat or sugar. They worked with teachers to integrate cross-curricular lessons on nutrition throughout the school day. The teacher resource center now has brochures, food models, lesson plans, surveys and other teaching tools to help them spread the message.

According to Reliford, “One of the lessons our teachers and administrators have learned is that students will adjust to healthy eating habits if it is incorporated on a consistent basis. Since teachers have implemented these concepts in class lessons, including physical activity in the classroom, our students have become healthier and happier children this year.”

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Seaborn Lee Elementary School

Fulton County
College Park, Georgia

The wellness council at Seaborn Lee has found that showing people how to make healthier choices is an ongoing process, one that must be continuously reinforced and modeled. They feel that after participating for one year with the Healthy Schools Program, the school as a whole is eating healthier and getting more physically active.

They designed a wellness calendar to serve as an outline for the year for students and staff so everyone could see the direction the program would take. The staff joined a “Biggest Loser” competition with other schools in their cluster to see who could lose the largest percentage of weight. They also added a movement component to their early release days for teachers and staff. They changed their vending machine options so that they only offer healthy snacks and beverages now.

The wellness council looked for local businesses willing to help them with their wellness efforts. They partnered with a local gym to provide discounts to staff and even invited a trainer from the gym to lead them through exercises during a faculty meeting. They brought in other organizations such as the American Kidney Fund and the American Diabetes Association to offer health screenings during other faculty meetings. They sought out fruit and vegetable donations for several staff meetings and school functions. And they found a local restaurant willing to give a demonstration on preparing healthy meals after school.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Glyndale Elementary School

Glynn County
Brunswick, Georgia

When Glyndale Elementary joined the Healthy Schools Program this past year they saw a need for creative approaches to add more health education to their curriculum. They started by using morning announcement time for ten minutes every day to show a health education video that can be viewed by the whole school on televisions in the classrooms. They integrated a computer-based health curriculum that is used during the technology class. In addition, they added a 9-week health education curriculum to the schedule where health is taught twice a week in 40-minute segments.

The school wellness council also focused on staff wellness opportunities. They hosted two “Biggest Loser” challenges and participated in the “Walk Across Georgia” walking program. The staff lost hundreds of pounds through these programs. They found a teacher who was certified to teach yoga and Pilates and they started offering those classes after school, usually with six to ten participants. An afterschool aerobics class was also added to the mix.

The wellness council wanted to make sure they were providing plenty of information for staff on making healthy choices. They purchased a BMI analyzer for staff to use to monitor progress. They started making changes to the vending machine options and placed heart stickers next to items that are low in fat, calories and carbohydrates.

Next year they hope to purchase a fitness assessment program such as “Fitnessgram.” This would allow the wellness council to monitor progress in students and share information with parents several times a year. They also plan to purchase the “Nutrition Nuggets” newsletter in English and Spanish to send home to families. The hope is that educating both students and parents in school as well as at home results in creating healthier lifestyles for generations to come.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

St. Simons Elementary School

Glynn County

Saint Simons Island, Georgia

For the first through fifth graders at St. Simons Elementary School, a monthly afterschool program offers a fun way to explore healthy choices. Paige Fox, a paraprofessional at the school with a fitness background, wanted to start a club that would expose children to a number of wellness topics with a hands-on approach. By tapping into a base of community and parent volunteers she has been able to create a diverse spectrum of lessons for the students to explore.

Some of the topics that have been presented include nutrition, cooking, yoga, Reiki, fitness, prevention, posture, balance and games. Each meeting commences with a thinking map to brainstorm relevant wellness ideas. As a result, the club is working on a wellness definition that currently states, "The better we care for ourselves, the better we are able to enjoy our lives."

In the "Hands on Food" session, dietician Allison Hendry R.D. focuses on healthy food choices. Children cut and arrange food portions on their plates and have several opportunities to taste over twenty food items. At another meeting, students cook with Glynn County Executive Chef, Fritz Schultz, making a healthier tuna melt and green bean salad. Janita Nelson, a certified yoga instructor, uses a puppet to tell a story that helps guide the children through different yoga poses. "The community has been extremely generous with its talents and time," said Fox.

St. Simons Principal Suzanne Clements explains, "At St. Simons Elementary our mission is, 'Joining hands to build a BRIGHTER future for our community!' Our wellness initiative directly impacts the future of our students. I believe obesity in our society can be a major drawback. Students need to be taught and have an opportunity to practice healthy lifestyle topics. Our wellness club is well on its way to accomplishing this goal!"

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Sterling Elementary School

Glynn County
Brunswick, Georgia

After completing the Healthy Schools Inventory, Sterling Elementary found that they needed to increase physical activity levels of students and staff. In the summer of 2008 they received a \$5,000 grant from the Georgia Department of Public Health through the school nurse liaison program. The funds were to be used to increase activity levels. After researching numerous options, the wellness council decided to focus on creating an outdoor fitness area for everyone to use.

The council purchased five fitness stations to install on the playground; a sit-up board, leg press, strength and stretch bars, horizontal bars, and sitting rotator. They thought that these stations would help ensure a total body workout. They also painted yellow lines on the bus parking pad to create a walking path. Eight laps equals one mile.

PTA parents and grandparents installed the stations in January 2009. The wellness council spent the \$5,000 grant on the equipment so the PTA donated funds to purchase concrete. A local Home Depot donated additional concrete and plywood to help with installation. Once the stations were installed, PE teacher Kim Hanson taught both students and staff how to properly use the equipment. The 4th and 5th grade teachers have incorporated the equipment into their recess plans and they lead the daily walkers. The faculty uses them after school to complement their walking club. The afterschool Boys and Girls Clubs use the equipment in their outside activities every afternoon. The wellness council has found that since installing the fitness stations students have increased their physical activity by 20%. Principal Kelly Howe said, "It is a safe place to exercise that is also fun. It has been a great addition to our playground."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Lindsey Elementary School

Houston County
Warner Robins, Georgia

Staff at Lindsey Elementary commented that they had their share of moans and groans about taking on a big new project like the Healthy Schools Program. However, when they reached the end of the first year they realized that the improvements made in their school did not increase their workload but did increase their energy and efficiency with which they did their work. Principal Anthony Lunceford said, "The most important thing this program has done for this school is establish a common bond that I never knew existed here."

The school has made changes to their school meals as well as started a fun and engaging staff wellness program. Lunchroom manager Slim Johnson worked to add a non-fried fish dish to the menu at least one day per week. Johnson said, "The kids loved the tuna so much that I doubled the amount I prepared by the second week!" They also switched all the milk products to 1% or less and added low-fat portion controlled salad dressings to the menu. Johnson has been known to puree cauliflower to resemble mashed potatoes and to add shredded carrots to spaghetti sauce.

The principal and assistant principal became team leaders for the staff wellness program. They formed two teams (red and green) to compete against each other and to keep motivation high. They were thrilled when over 40 staff and faculty members showed up to participate on the first day. The team captains would do roll call at the beginning of each session to encourage regular attendance. Team members shared healthy recipes throughout the competition. At the end, over 140 pounds had been lost and team members gained more accountability, self-confidence and a greater appreciation for each other.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Northside Elementary School

Houston County
Warner Robins, Georgia

Although Darlene Owens, nutrition manager at Northside Elementary, was hesitant at first about making the switch from 2% to 1% milk, she actually found that the kids prefer the lower-fat milk! This gave Owens the confidence she needed to start making other healthy changes in the lunchroom. She removed the strawberry milk completely and added non-fried fish to the menu at least one day per week. Owens said, "The addition of tuna to the chef salad was a big hit!" She also now ensures that a low fat, 1oz. dressing is available for the to-go salads.

The wellness council also wanted to offer a fun yet effective wellness program for school staff and faculty. Even though they completed the staff wellness interest survey, they were surprised to see such a large turnout at the first meeting. They decided to form two teams which would compete against each other. The team captains helped locate aerobic and fitness instructors to help lead their workouts. Sometimes the two teams would exercise together which helped keep them motivated. Team members also shared healthy recipes. At the end, they found out which team had lost the most pounds overall.

Staff at Northside Elementary feel like one of the greatest benefits of participating in the Healthy Schools Program is that it helped create "pathways of communication for the faculty and staff." It has also helped open doors to new partnerships throughout the district. In order to complete their recognition application they had to work closely with the Director of Nursing, the Director of School Nutrition, the district dietician and the Coordinator of Health, Music and Physical Education. They believe that these new partnerships will help sustain their efforts towards creating healthier schools throughout the district.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Northside High School

Houston County
Warner Robins, Georgia

Every geographic region presents its own advantages and challenges when it comes to improving the health of its citizens. For this school in the south, removing the sweet tea could have been a very controversial action. To solve that problem the lunchroom manager, Wanda Keene, the district dietician and the school nutrition area supervisor got together to create a new no-calorie sweet tea recipe which helped them come into compliance with the Alliance Beverage Guidelines while maintaining peace in the lunchroom.

Keene has also been instrumental in providing leadership to the newly formed Nutrition Advisory Council. The mission of the club is to use the Alliance Guidelines as a tool to create a healthier school environment through student involvement. A group of 25 students meets once a month to learn about and discuss nutrition topics, and to talk about how to share these lessons with the rest of the student body. They also learn healthy cooking skills. Keene said, "Seeing students positively influence their peers is so cool! No adult can influence teenagers' decision patterns like their friends."

The school wellness council also invited faculty, staff and parents to join a friendly exercise competition called "Walk Across Georgia." Twenty-four people signed up to compete in six teams of four. They logged their exercise and converted it into miles, while tracking it on a map of Georgia. The teams were able to see their mileage as well as the other teams' progress which helped keep motivation levels high. The teams walked over 1600 miles in less than eight weeks. Northside High Principal Mark Scott said, "This program gave teachers a chance to share and develop friendships that we so desperately needed beyond the everyday pressure of classroom instruction."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Pearl Stephens Elementary School

Houston County
Warner Robins, Georgia

After completing a staff wellness interest survey, the school wellness council at Pearl Stephens agreed on two goals for the year: increasing the number of employees who are at a healthy weight and increasing the percentage of employees who consume a healthy diet.

The council started by offering an exercise class two days a week after school for staff. The physical education teacher introduced the employees to different cross training activities and set up stations, including a one-mile course inside of the school, for staff and faculty to use during their breaks. She encouraged everyone to find a walking buddy. These activities did not cost any money because the physical education teacher was able to use equipment that was already a part of the physical education program.

One obstacle they encountered was that teachers did not seem to feel comfortable using the exercise equipment when the physical education teacher was not at school. To help solve this program they created an exercise log for employees to use to keep track of the exercise they were doing outside of school. They also decided that other teachers should be trained on how to use the equipment and how to lead the exercise group when the physical education teacher was not able to be there. The wellness council reports that due to the efforts made to help staff and faculty feel comfortable and stay fit, they have seen "great changes concerning body composition, self esteem and workplace enjoyment."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Thomson Middle School

Houston County
Centerville, Georgia

The Houston County School system was introduced to the Healthy Schools Program during the Forum held in Little Rock, Arkansas during the summer of 2008. The district dietician served as the representative from the 37 schools in the county. After her experience at the Forum she selected seven schools to pilot the Healthy Schools Program and begin the transformation to a healthier school district.

Thomson Middle School was one of the schools invited to participate. With the support of Alesia Chadwick, parent involvement coordinator, who took charge of forming the wellness council at Thomson, changes started to happen. Chadwick worked to pull together a group that was representative of the school and included parents, teachers, administrators and community members. The first goal of the group was to assess the needs and desires of the employees. After distributing and analyzing the staff wellness interest survey they established that staff was most interested in an organized walking program.

Many changes were made this year in the school meals program. They added a non-fried fish entrée at least once a week. They started serving a low fat, portion controlled dressing for the to-go salads and they switched to 1% or less milk products. The wellness council believes that the year was a "fast-paced learning process." They believe they are now ready to hit the ground running when school resumes in August. They hope to incorporate more parent participation to encourage healthy lifestyles for the entire Thomson school family.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Westside Elementary School

Houston County
Warner Robins, Georgia

When Westside Elementary joined the Healthy Schools Program last summer they were surprised to learn how close they were to reaching the Bronze National Recognition Award. This knowledge gave them confidence and validation that they were on the right path and provided the motivation to continue to work towards creating an even healthier school environment.

Westside Elementary shared many of the same hurdles as other schools in getting the program off the ground- attitudes, time restraints, budget issues and resistance to change. However, with the constant support of the principal and physical education teacher, everyone began to see changes. The physical education teacher posted a notice asking interested faculty and staff to join the school wellness council and was pleased that eleven school employees joined in addition to three parents. The council now meets once a month after the general school council meeting.

Some of the biggest changes at Westside have taken place in the school cafeteria where the nutrition manager has worked to add a non-fried fish item to the menu at least one day per week. Despite the increased cost, she ensured that a low fat, 1 oz. dressing is provided for the to-go salads. They made the switch to 1% or less milk products and removed the strawberry milk which had too many calories to meet the Alliance's Beverage Guidelines.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Perry Meridian High School

Perry Township
Indianapolis, Indiana

“Perry Meridian hopes to lead the way for high schools across America in fighting the battle of the bulge against teens,” said Linda Burdine, promotion and marketing teacher at Perry Meridian. Burdine and her students are trying to market the idea of a healthy lifestyle to students and staff, and they are succeeding. Student Christina Cheng said, “Students are becoming more aware of how to be healthy. By 2015, most Americans will be obese and that is scary. That is why the F.I.T. program is great.”

The Perry Meridian F.I.T. (Falcons in Training) Club, a completely student driven effort, was busy all year hosting fun events for their peers, and spreading their healthy message online. Students at Perry Meridian decided they wanted to start a club focused on improving student health and wellness. They chose a name, found a teacher sponsor, created a logo, designed a t-shirt, and developed a theme-based, interactive monthly calendar for the school. Some examples of the themes include drinking water, stretching and eating breakfast.

This year, staff were surveyed in order to create a staff wellness program. They purchased pedometers, yoga mats and paid a yoga teacher to come in twice a month. They surveyed students to assess interest in additional intramural opportunities. Student participation in the intramural program has risen significantly this year.

Burdine said, “Working with the Alliance has inspired our students to be more health conscious, and has encouraged the leaders to step up and create programs that involve the entire school.”

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Manchester Park Elementary School

Olathe School District

Lenexa, Kansas

The motto at Manchester Park Elementary is “Doing it Right and Doing it Well!” Staff and administration have taken several big steps this year to motivate students, staff and families to improve their health and to create a healthier school environment. For physical education teacher and school wellness leader Julie Dunnaway, this meant totally rethinking the concept of snacks and rewards.

Last August Principal Susan DeGroot sent a letter home to parents introducing the idea of “refueling” and asked that they only send fresh fruit or vegetables for their students’ snacks. She wanted parents to think about the snacks as a way to re-energize for the rest of the day and not as a temporary sugar rush. DeGroot and Dunnaway had observed that everyone had gotten into a routine where snack time became a time to munch on cookies, candy and chips, whether they were actually hungry or not.

Students are also moving more with “JAMmin’ Minutes” throughout the day and staff are using energizers during staff meetings. Last August featured a Games Day based on the Six Steps to a Trouble Free Playground model. Games were taught to staff, parents and students that encourage maximum movement, small-size games and inclusion for all abilities. Chocolate and wrapping paper fundraisers have been replaced with a walk/jog-a-thon. Recognizing that not all students want to participate in a competitive sport, additional physical activity opportunities were added before and after school. The school found retired dance instructors who help teach ballroom dance classes to 4th-6th graders during the Morning Movers program before school.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Owsley County High School

Owsley County
Booneville, Kentucky

Owsley County has a dynamic duo in Sue Brunk, school nurse and health educator, and Charolette Thompson, food service director. The two worked together to bring new afterschool programs to the school that will help keep kids off of the couch. The afterschool program runs from 3-5 p.m. and has a 30-minute physical activity component in addition to a healthy snack. The students vote on what kinds of activities they would like to participate.

A cooking class is also being offered which helps high school students create simple and healthy recipes out of whatever ingredients they have available. Brunk said it is important to give students these skills since, "Schools do not offer Home Ec anymore and we have several kids who go home to a house that maybe has one hot plate. How are they going to meet their nutritional needs with that? Here they can practice what they can do with food that is donated to us. Many of these students are given food backpacks to take home to supplement the food they have."

To kick-off the new program, they brought the community together for an event called "Game On." Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge is an Action for Healthy Kids resource designed to motivate schools to put their wellness policies into action. The event provided students with a series of challenges that encouraged physical activity and good nutrition. Brunk set up a station called, "Let's Talk," where she described in detail the new afterschool programs that she would be offering. She emphasized to students that, "the choices you make today affect your tomorrows." She had them take time to write down some wellness goals and said, "I can't choose your goals for you, but I can inform you on how to get there."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Mountain Valley Middle School

MSAD 43 Mexico

Mexico, Maine

Mountain Valley Middle School has a strong track record when it comes to earning recognition for their health and wellness efforts. Last year the school was ranked the 5th healthiest school in the nation by Health Magazine. They have received two significant Carol M. White PEP Grants and the district has received Maine Department of Education Schools of Excellence Awards in 6 of the 8 components of a Coordinated School Health Program since 2005.

Numerous programs and activities have contributed to creating this culture of health at the school. Health education, physical education and family and consumer science classes are taught by certified staff members at each grade level. Every student receives 165 minutes of physical education per week and the school has implemented the "Take Time" program which adds an extra 10-20 minutes of daily physical activity throughout the school day.

The PEP grants have helped the school purchase a variety of equipment which allows them to maintain an emphasis on helping students develop a lifelong pursuit of leisure and physical activity. Students at Mountain Valley enjoy equipment such as a climbing wall, mountain bikes, snowshoes, cross country skis, Dance Dance Revolution, Wii, in-line skates and golfing, just to name a few.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Randolph Heights Elementary School

St. Paul Public Schools

St. Paul, Minnesota

When the school wellness council at Randolph Heights completed their Healthy Schools Program Inventory and saw just how close they were to reaching the Bronze level, they were inspired to work diligently towards that goal. Joby Randrup, health and physical education teacher, feels that the St. Paul School District helped give them a good head start by requiring schools in 2006 to meet or exceed the district wellness policy requirements.

This year the wellness council wanted to spread the healthy living message throughout the school so they came up with a social marketing campaign, called "RHS Health Kids." Four students and one teacher are featured each month and answer questions about their favorite foods, physical activities and stress reducers.

With a strong physical education program in place (PE is delivered by qualified staff and every lesson includes National Association for Sports and Physical Education objectives and benchmarks), it was time to address health education. Thanks to the Randolph Heights art teacher and "scheduling guru," the school schedule was rearranged to add class time for health education, technology education and science experimentation. Randrup now teaches physical education four out of six days and then health education (using curriculum containing American Association for Health Education standards) on the other two days. The staff at Randolph Heights has seen that with a little creativity and flexibility they can have a real impact on the school curriculum.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

West Bolivar High School

West Bolivar
Rosedale, Mississippi

The administration, faculty, staff and community of West Bolivar High worked together as a unit in creating and implementing a plan to help the district become a healthier place to learn and work. The team set goals that included changing the eating habits of students and staff, increasing parental and community involvement, getting all students enrolled in health and physical education and creating more opportunities for physical activity for everyone.

To address the goal of increasing physical activity opportunities, the school worked with the physical education department to keep the gym open after school three days a week for open gym time. Students can participate in a variety of activities including basketball, volleyball, running, jump rope and Frisbee. They have also created a fitness room where students and staff can engage in weight training or aerobic activities twice a week after school.

Students and staff also have the option to join the West Bolivar High School power-walking group which offers a fun and easy way to add additional physical activity to their day. The group starts with some stretching exercises and a brief warm-up, followed by a long and fast walk and ending with a cool down.

Health teacher Gwendolyn Vaughn shares that the soda machines were removed from the building and a healthy food policy adopted for classroom celebrations. "When you set common goals within your district, they are reachable," she concluded.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Brookfield Elementary School

Brookfield R-III
Brookfield, Missouri

In the fall of 2005, Brookfield Elementary first grade teachers began a walking program to comply with the wellness curriculum the state had implemented. The first year, students walked every Friday morning during recess. One time around the playground was considered one lap and each student received a punch on his/her punch card for each lap. After accumulating twenty punches, students received a foot keychain and after every five miles they could earn another foot to add to their keychain.

Over the years, the program has spread throughout the other grades and is starting to make its way through the local middle school as well. "The kids really seem to enjoy it as well as challenge themselves and each other each week," said Susan McBroom, first grade teacher. For \$100, teachers purchased a kit which includes the punch cards, keychains and plastic feet.

In addition to the walking program, students are receiving additional nutrition education from the Missouri Extension Office. The two-week program is aligned to the Missouri State guidelines. Students learn about each food group and how foods help them grow, play, think and have strong bones and teeth. The older students learn about nutrients, digestion and the cause and effect of making healthy choices versus less healthy choices. They also have the opportunity to taste numerous fruits and vegetables that they had not had before. Students especially enjoyed the clementines because they were sweet, easy to peel, contained vitamin C and made their classroom "smell so good."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Brookfield Middle School & High School

Brookfield R-III
Brookfield, Missouri

To reach students that do not normally participate in physical activity on a regular basis, the wellness council at Brookfield Middle School designed a challenge that would encourage students to move more by having fun. The challenge they came up with went beyond the typical walking/running program and provided opportunities for students to try eclipse ball, weightlifting, bowling and roller-skating! Students kept track of how many minutes they spent being active and each grade declared a winner at the end of a six-week period.

Over at Brookfield High School, the focus was on improving the foods brought into the school for sales, rewards and celebrations. They wanted to replace soda at the high school dances so they looked around for a healthy but tasty alternative. They found a 100% juice slush drink which was offered in different flavors, served in an 8 oz. cup. The students seemed hesitant at first but after the first dance held last September, it was evident that the drink was a hit. The students liked it so much they asked the advisors to have it available at every dance. Soda has not been missed.

The school wellness council also felt that it was important to provide more information to students, staff and parents about the need for improving the competitive foods and beverages sold at the school, or brought to school from outside. Using resources from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation as well as the local health department, they designed an information campaign about healthy snacks. This included lists of healthy snack suggestions for staff and parents.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Gratz Brown Elementary School

Moberly School District

Moberly, Missouri

At Gratz Brown Elementary School in Moberly, students were treated to a special day of events last November to promote physical activity. Students and staff started the morning at the daily assembly by dancing to the popular song, “YMCA.” Throughout the day, students used their bodies and minds to actively engage in reading, writing and math activities related to the benefits of fitness. The school also hosted a fitness poster contest to promote being physically active.

The school wellness council planned a physical activity challenge for students where they were asked to keep track of how many minutes they engaged in physical activity outside of school (such as sport practice, riding a bike, walking, etc.). The students recorded the minutes for a week and at the end the classes tallied up the results and announced the winner. The prize? The winning class teacher was going to read the class a book on the roof of the building! The week also ended with a “Walk to School” day where staff and students met at a nearby location and walked to school together. When they got to school they were greeted by a “grab-and-go” breakfast with fruit, milk and a granola bar.

Gratz Brown has also worked to improve their school meals and competitive foods. They offered a training for their food service staff on reducing fat and sodium in food preparation. They also developed a policy stating that all competitive foods would become compliant with the Alliance Competitive Foods Guidelines within twelve months and they disseminated this information to parents.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Moberly Middle School

Moberly School District

Moberly, Missouri

Staff at Moberly Middle School appreciated the support system created through an on site employee wellness program. Seventh grade teacher Diane David said, "The fact that there were people experiencing what I was going through, especially with the difficulty and obstacles that occur with a weight loss plan, helped me to stay on track."

Health teacher and school wellness council member Meredith Petit distributed a staff wellness interest survey and then hosted a meeting to work out the details. They decided on a weight loss challenge, where teams would come together twice a week and have a weekly weigh-in. Staff members paid ten dollars to participate and the winner at the end of the three-month period won the cash prize. Sixteen staff members joined the challenge. One student shared that the challenge "makes me want to get up and start competing against the teachers myself!"

To provide an outlet for the students to stay active the school developed a new before/after school program called the "Fitness Club." Students come to school early and stay after the bell rings because they are excited about participating in physical activity opportunities. The program started when school wellness council members decided that they needed to do more to get the students moving. They said at first it was challenging to find volunteers to facilitate the club's activities but that the wellness council members have each been doing their part to help out. According to Pettit, "We are striving toward not being another statistic; we do not want the trend to be for MMS students to be a part of the growing epidemic of childhood obesity. Kids are willing and excited to be active and healthy; they merely need to be given the opportunity."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

North Park Elementary School

Moberly School District

Moberly, Missouri

The North Park school wellness council understands that removing obstacles to physical activity is crucial in helping people adopt more active lifestyles. This is why they have taken the proactive step of inviting parents to join their staff wellness program which includes morning walking groups, classes at the local YMCA, fitness classes in the school gym and identifying upcoming community walks to do together as a team.

This innovative idea has great potential for creating lasting changes. Research supports that parent-teacher interaction is a positive influence on student performance. Connections that link schools with their broader community can yield positive health benefits and increase access to social services and resources. Offering convenient opportunities for staff and parents to exercise is also an excellent way to create more healthy role models for the students. Students will be more likely to see the healthy messages they are learning about in school carry over into their homes.

To assist teachers with providing meaningful lessons to students about the value of eating vegetables, the North Park school wellness council collected and distributed curricular materials on healthy eating before Vegetable Day. During the special event, students sampled zucchini, celery and peanut butter, cauliflower, broccoli, sliced mushrooms, grape tomatoes, mini-carrots, cucumbers, green peppers and light ranch dressing. Parents donated vegetables and supplies, and food was prepared for tasting by parent volunteers and members of the school wellness council. The students loved this experience, and many found that they liked each of the vegetables served. Students read about vegetables, wrote about vegetables using the five senses, and graphed their favorite vegetables. This day was such a great success that they decided to do the same with a Fruit Day!

Success Story **Bronze Award**

South Park Elementary School

Moberly School District

Moberly, Missouri

South Park was determined to reach the Bronze National Recognition Award this year. Early in the school year, they sat down to create an action plan that would lead them down the road to success. They started by researching the Alliance's Competitive Foods and Beverage Guidelines and developed a strategy to adopt the Guidelines. They wrote a new school policy that incorporated the Guidelines, sent it home to parents and posted it on the school website by January.

The wellness council also looked for a way to promote adding more physical activity into the day for staff members. "We tried an afterschool walking program but it just didn't generate much interest," said Brian Hunsaker, school wellness council chairperson. Hunsaker then learned of a staff member, Bobbi Martin, who teaches aerobics at the local YMCA. He approached her and she agreed to lead an exercise class twice a week after school.

Martin led the group in different kinds of exercises such as cardio, toning, strength training and stretching. She noted that they had an average of five teachers that attended each week. "Once the word spread about the class we decided to open it up to parents as well. We had about three parents that were faithful attendees." After six weeks the staff agreed that they felt better and less stressed.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Crete High School

Crete Public Schools

Crete, Nebraska

The school wellness council at Crete High School is proud of three major improvements to their school's health this year. The first was to increase use of the school fitness and weight room so that staff and students now have access to the equipment before and after school, and throughout the summer. Physical education teacher Chuck McGinnis helps staff develop an exercise and weight-lifting program that fits their personal fitness goals and body type.

The second was when the school was able to sign a new beverage agreement that brought them into compliance with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Beverage Guidelines. They even took the extra step of adjusting the prices of the beverages so that the water and 100% juice options cost less than the diet soda.

The third was that the SWC also held the first ever health screening event for staff at the school during an in-service day. Crete Area Medical Clinic lab technicians were on hand to draw blood to check cholesterol, triglycerides and glucose levels. They also took blood pressure, BMI and waist measurements. Each participant was given a "Watch Your Numbers" card to record and keep their information. The district also paid half the cost of the lab fees which increased participation. One teacher said, "The convenience of being able to get a health screening at school during in-service and have half of it paid by the district was awesome. Let's do this again next year!"

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Crete Middle School

Crete Public Schools

Crete, Nebraska

Students from one 8th grade health class at Crete Middle School decided if they wanted to see a change in the a la carte items that were provided they should help initiate that change. As a newly formed student wellness council with teacher Becki Deisley's guidance, they focused and prioritized their efforts to include offering some healthier options on the a la carte line. "The school wellness council has really opened up the minds of all students and staff for the need to be aware of what we are eating and the importance of exercise. We are already an obese nation; even if we can each make small steps we can make a difference," said Alan Poteet, student wellness council president.

The council's first step was to meet with Jodi Erickson, food service director, to learn about existing efforts in the school district to create a healthier lunchroom and brainstorm new ideas. They came up with a new a la carte item called granola bites which are tortilla, peanut butter, honey and granola rolled up and sliced. Staff and students love them and they leave lunch feeling full and not going back for items that contain little nutritional value.

Another big project the council implemented is a smoothie fundraiser. The wellness council has developed a recipe and makes from scratch fruit smoothies, which are sold on Friday's during "Friday Fun Day" (end of day). Money raised will go toward a commercial size smoothie machine so that all students can have a smoothie as an option in the lunch line and can replace unhealthy options for classroom celebrations. Crete will work with Healthy Schools Program staff to make sure their products meet the Alliance's Competitive Food Guidelines.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Cooper B. Hatch Middle School

Camden City
Camden, New Jersey

Students at Cooper B. Hatch found more opportunities to get up and move during the school day this year. The physical education chair opened the gym a half an hour early three days a week for students to come play soccer, volleyball, basketball or floor hockey. Classes walked more and kept track of their miles in an effort to walk all the way to Disney World! Incentives and class competitions along the way kept everyone motivated.

Another fun program is lunchtime dance aerobics. The dance club instructor created routines to popular songs and the dance club students lead the dancing in the cafeteria before lunch is served. A “no cut” policy was instituted to the intramural sports program to encourage all levels of ability to participate. Students choose to join cross-country, volleyball, basketball, track and field, jump rope, fitness, softball or soccer.

A “Cultural Tastes” program was introduced for parents and students to learn about healthy foods from a variety of cultures. Healthy treats from around the world are shared at Back to School Night, parent teacher conference nights, during monthly family nights and at honor roll luncheons. The 6th and 7th graders also participated in a nutrition workshop provided by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program which focused on making healthy eating choices.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Dr. Charles E. Brimm Medical Arts High School

Camden City
Camden, New Jersey

Having a large and diversified school wellness council is the key to success in developing effective wellness programs according to staff at Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School. As their group continued to grow they found they had increased enthusiasm and more dynamic brainstorming sessions.

Two parent members of the school wellness council got involved by planning a line dancing event for the school, and hiring a professional line dancing teacher. They thought this would be a fun way to promote the Healthy Schools Program while getting students, staff and families up and moving.

After completing the staff wellness interest survey they started an afterschool exercise club for staff and students. The club meets twice a week and is led by Jeana Harris, one of the health and physical education teachers at Brimm. She is a certified aerobics teacher who is able to challenge the group to meet their full potential. One student, after her first class said, "Wow! I had no idea you worked so hard! I'm exhausted and sweaty!" The group reports that they are still sweating but also feel increased endurance and strength.

Everyone at Dr. Brimm is also enjoying the "Healthy Tip of the Week," read over the intercom by a 9th grader, best known as "Special K." He has an energetic speaking voice and is able to project enthusiasm for the healthy ideas.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Forest Hill Elementary School

Camden City
Camden, New Jersey

Forest Hill Elementary has taken a quote from former Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders to heart, "You can not educate a child if they are not healthy and you certainly cannot keep them healthy if they are not educated." The school's goal is to not only be a premier academic school, but to also be a stellar example of a healthy school and to improve the overall well-being of the children of Camden.

They recognize that having staff serve as good health role models is crucial in their effort and they have come up with a few fun and creative ways to help their employees get fit. They have started a weekly line dancing class which is taught by a former Forest Hill student who is now in high school. Staff chips in two dollars per week to pay him for his time. They have opened up the class to parents as well. They are all having a great time exercising, sweating and laughing together!

They also started the "Pound-A-Week" weight loss club. Each participant paid \$12 to join the program and the school nurse was responsible for weighing each participant each week. The person who lost the most weight each week received a two-dollar rebate. At the end of the program the person who lost the most weight won half of the pool, second place took home one third of the pool and the person in third place took home one sixth of the money. However, there was a catch to make sure the program was sustained. The winners had to re-weigh one month later. If they stayed within two pounds of their winning weight they were able to keep the winnings. If they had gained more than two pounds back they had to give back half of their winnings.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Pyne Poynt Middle School

Camden City
Camden, New Jersey

The wellness council at Pyne Poynt has found success by tapping into internal resources- talented teachers who are willing to share their time to help their colleagues become healthier. One teacher has volunteered to lead the staff line dancing class three days per week after school. This has been a very popular program and other teachers seem to appreciate her efforts.

One of the frequent participants, Frances Gill, said, "The wellness program has become an important part of my life. Getting back to exercising and eating properly has given me more energy, and working out with colleagues not only affords me the opportunity to get to know them better but it's also a lot of fun!"

The wellness council also started a nutrition club for staff. They get together to discuss recipe ideas and encourage each other to reach weight loss goals. They say it is a great way to create awareness of healthier eating habits and to support each other. Another dedicated staff member has even volunteered to cook two nutritious meals a week for other staff members who are unable to find the time to prepare healthy meals. They pay "The Cook" five dollars per meal.

In February, the wellness council started a before school hip-hop aerobics class for students that was offered twice a week. They called the program "Get Up!" and a healthy breakfast followed the aerobics class. Although it was a lot of fun they had a hard time getting more than 11 students. Other students said it was too early in the morning. Therefore, they reevaluated and decided to offer an afterschool fitness club instead. Students at Pyne Poynt find other ways to stay active through recess, physical education classes and the intramural sports program.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Woodrow Wilson High School

Camden City
Camden, New Jersey

The dedicated staff and students at Woodrow Wilson High are spreading the message about healthy eating all around their school, and even all the way up to Congress. They are working with Physicians for Social Responsibility on their campaign to ask Congress for healthier, vegetarian school lunch options and other changes to the Child Nutrition Act.

Rutger's Cooperative Extension Nutrition Program provides six weeks of nutrition education workshops for the special needs students. Woodrow Wilson also received a grant from the Cardiovascular Institute of Philadelphia to conduct nutrition education workshops throughout the year for students and staff. They held the first one in May and offered a presentation on heart health by the school nurse followed by a nutrition lesson with the family and consumer science teacher and then a cooking demonstration with the food production teacher and students. Topics included the food guide pyramid, reading food labels and healthy mealtime tips.

In addition to a staff walking program and yoga which will start this fall, the wellness council established a "Wellness Book Club." Staff and community members are allowed to borrow wellness related books on nutrition, exercise and other healthy living topics. Staff have shown great enthusiasm for this project and they look forward to continuing it when school resumes in the fall.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Helen Morgan School

Sparta Township School District

Sparta, New Jersey

For the Bulldogs of Helen Morgan Elementary, moving more and eating healthy foods has become their rallying cry. To add extra physical activity to the day, teachers started using exercises from the “JAMmin’ Minute” program to lead students in fun and energetic bursts of movement. The entire school participated in the American Heart Association’s Jump Rope for Heart program. The cafeteria also started providing a healthy breakfast for students involved in the before school program.

With help from a local grant, the school wellness council hosted a health and nutrition assembly where they invited the whole school to learn about the benefits of making healthy choices. Teachers received worksheets for reinforcing the messages in the classroom. They also used this opportunity to hand out pedometers to all students and staff and asked everyone to start counting their steps. They also printed healthy recipes and fitness tip handouts to send home to families.

The physical education teacher at Helen Morgan holds a “Bull Dog Run” marathon to reinforce the importance of staying fit. Children, parents and staff look forward to this event every year. This year the grant helped purchase healthy snacks for all participants.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Benjamin C. Gregory Elementary School

Trenton City
Trenton, New Jersey

“As the cliché states, ‘It takes a whole village to raise a child,’ according to Kimberly Georgevich, physical and health education teacher at Gregory Elementary, At Gregory our school is our village as so many of us who work in the school and the community care and are devoted to making it a healthier place to be. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Healthy Schools Program and our Relationship Manager have assisted us tremendously, helping to break down those steps we can take to create a healthier school environment for our ‘village.’”

The staff at Gregory has been passionate about organizing their school wellness council (SWC) and starting down the path towards a healthier school ever since joining the Healthy Schools Program in September 2008. They already have an active SWC which represents the diversity of the Gregory Elementary school community and includes the principal, food service manager, social worker, physical and health education teacher, parent liaison, para-professional, special education teacher and school nurse. They are now working on recruiting parents and students.

An important lesson learned for the SWC at Gregory is to start small and allow the group to grow over time, ensuring that you have the right people on board. They have also observed that if you start by taking “baby steps” with your wellness initiatives it does not feel overwhelming for those trying to implement the changes. Kimberly Georgevich added, “Although we here at the school are all under unbelievable pressures with our work, being a part of the school wellness council does not feel like a burden or one more thing to do. It is not about clocking in at 9 am and clocking out at 5 pm. We care about our school and our community and with that are dedicated to making it a healthier place for our kids and staff.”

Success Story **Bronze Award**

WNY Public School Number 1

West New York Town School District

West New York, New Jersey

West New York PS #1 got things rolling after New Years with a wellness assembly kick-off. Students and staff were introduced to the wellness council and the concept of overall well-being. Everyone was given a pedometer and challenged to log their steps on a daily basis. Since then, teachers have integrated use of the pedometers into their lesson plans. They also used the assembly to announce the new student fitness club which started at the end of January.

The fitness club was held three days a week before school throughout the rest of the school year. They arranged with the food service department to have a healthy breakfast and snack served to fitness club members. The program has been met with great enthusiasm- almost 100 students have joined the program!

Teachers took on introducing physical activity breaks during the school day and added a structured recess time during the lunch period. They also began to incorporate more nutrition focused lesson plans into the curriculum.

The wellness council is proud of the strong relationship they built with the Parent Teacher Organization. They hope to utilize these connections to host informational meetings for parents next year. They also hope to recruit more participants for a staff wellness program that will address physical activity, healthy eating, weight management, stress management and tobacco cessation.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

WNY Public School Number 2

West New York Town School District

West New York, New Jersey

“The thing about the wellness initiative that excites me is the way that it has taken hold in West New York. It started out with a few individuals who wanted to make a change and the word spread. Each day I get calls and e-mails from people with ideas for programs and offers to help us with our mission. I think we are only scratching the surface in what we can accomplish.”
John Fraraccio, district supervisor of health and physical education, West New York schools.

Even with tremendous support and rising excitement throughout the district, PS #2 still faced their share of obstacles this year because their school building has been under renovation since 2007. Students have to be bussed to another school every day and the extra time spent on the bus makes it more difficult for them to participate in before or afterschool programs. Still, with limited time and space, they set out to create a before school program that would help students get up and moving before heading to their classroom. With only a small blacktop area outside and the auditorium to use, they found that jumping rope was the most fun and practical activity, and the students love it!

PS #2 also worked on setting up their school wellness council this year and conducted a staff wellness interest survey. They are very excited about moving back into their building and putting all of their great ideas into practice.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

WNY Public School Number 3

West New York Town School District

West New York, New Jersey

Students at PS #3 in West New York are dancing their way to a better school day. The wellness council started offering a dance class before school and was very pleased when 42 students showed up on the first day. Students are enjoying the warm-ups and “stress free movement.” As a culminating event, the group was invited to show their moves during the school’s spring concert.

Additional physical activities are being offered during lunchtime to help students move more before returning to their studies. More kids are engaging in jump rope and other aerobic activities during this time. School staff is moving more as well through yoga classes and an exercise boot camp. The district is also offering the Weight Watchers program for interested employees.

The school wellness council decided that all sugary snacks for kindergarteners needed to be eliminated and sent home letters to parents asking that only fruit or fruit juices be sent in for snacks. They also sent information on healthy snacks home to help families. The school found that these small snack changes created large changes in behavior and academic performance so they are very pleased with the results of this change. The school leadership committee has also decided to hold regular healthy snack sales for the students.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Pulaski Street Elementary School

Riverhead Central School District

Riverhead, New York

Starting in December, students at Pulaski Street and three other schools in the district began receiving fresh fruits and vegetable snacks each day in school from a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) grant awarded to the district from the New York State Education Child Nutrition Department. The snack items include items like apples, kiwi, red peppers, broccoli, strawberries, pears, cantaloupe and yellow peppers. All fruits and vegetables must be fresh and raw. In addition to eating a healthy snack each day, the students learn about the fruits and vegetables they are consuming, why they are important and the concepts of good nutrition.

The FFVP is a new program designed to provide fresh fruits and vegetables during the school day and after school, free of charge to all schoolchildren in participating schools. Providing a variety of fresh fruit and vegetable choices supports a healthy school environment. The food items must be fresh, not canned, frozen or mixed with other foods. They also must be served as a snack rather than as part of the regular meal service. An additional criterion is that the items must be domestic, with the exception of bananas. The intent is to increase children's fresh fruit and vegetable consumption, establish healthy snack choices and expand the variety of fruits and vegetables that children experience, in order to positively impact their present and future health.

The grant is for \$130,575 and the Riverhead Central School District is the only school district on Long Island to receive the grant. Karen Ball, director of the district's food service program, handles the purchase and distribution of the produce. Ball has encouraged area farmers to contact her with quotes for fresh fruit and vegetables.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

West Babylon Junior High School

West Babylon

West Babylon, New York

After receiving a local mini-grant, the school wellness council at West Babylon Junior High set out to start a breakfast program for students who arrive early to school. Students are now able to choose from an assortment of fresh fruit, cereal bars, fruit juice and low-fat milk. Additionally, funds were used to treat the entire student body to breakfast prior to the administering of both the New York State English Language Arts Test and the State Math Assessment.

The school also started a student ambassador program. Fifteen students from all three grade levels participated in tasting healthy foods, which then became available as lunch choices. The entire student body was able to make choices and suggestions through a student survey. Changes were made in the staff cafeteria as well, based on a separate staff survey conducted to assess food preferences. The school adopted a “No Junk” fundraising policy which eliminated bake sales and candy sales as fundraising options.

The wellness council is proud of their accomplishments and believes that by incorporating healthier food choices, student input and the breakfast program that they are well on their way to increasing health and well-being throughout the school community. They are confident that these positive steps will also aid their students in making healthy choices in the future.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Long Mill Elementary School

Franklin County
Youngsville, North Carolina

When the chair of the school wellness council at Long Mill forwarded an article she read about another school in Atlanta, it sparked an idea for what is now a very popular before school program. The wellness council first asked the principal for permission to revamp the morning program to include structured physical activity for students who arrive early to school. With approval in hand, it only took Terry Alston, physical education teacher, two weeks to create some new routines and to select the soundtracks for the “Morning Moves” program.

The teachers at Long Mill take turns coming in early to supervise the students and they now join in the fun with the students. The K-2 students walk laps around the gym while the 3rd-5th grade students do dance routines in the middle of the gym. The groups rotate every ten minutes. They enjoy tunes such as the “Electric Slide,” and the “Cubic Shuffle.” Parent volunteers have also helped make this program a success and the number of students participating continues to rise.

Next year the wellness council plans to add pedometers to the school supply list so that every student will have one. They are also working on plans to build a walking trail on the school campus and to adapt the fields so that they can be used for softball, soccer and other activities. They hope to work on enhancing their curriculum so that more physical activity is infused throughout the subjects.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Hollister Elementary School

Halifax County
Hollister, North Carolina

Making lower calorie foods available to staff at Hollister was the number one priority of the school wellness council and school improvement team this year. With staff meetings, workshops and staff celebrations always offering food, there were plenty of opportunities for staff to indulge in unhealthy options. The school wellness council strongly believed that the path to a healthier school environment needed to start with turning their faculty and staff into healthier role models for their students. The staff wellness interest survey confirmed that the staff was interested in a transformation as well.

The wellness council opted for a gradual process of adding healthy foods and removing unhealthy foods over time. First, they added fruit and yogurt and then gradually took away the biscuits, gravy and potatoes. For lunch meetings, baked chicken and vegetable trays replaced fried chicken. They found that the cost of offering healthy choices was only slightly higher so the benefits definitely outweighed the cost involved.

Now that the wellness council has staff eating healthier foods, the plan for next year is to have everyone moving more. The wellness council plans to start a walking/running club at the beginning of the year and to work with the school nurse and local health department to provide health information to both students and staff. The biggest lesson learned this year is that starting small and making gradual changes can help people change their habits and attitudes without turning them off in the process.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Vaughan Elementary School

Warren County
Vaughan, North Carolina

The school wellness council at Vaughan kicked off the school year with a staff wellness interest survey and found that a major concern of the staff was healthy snacking. Within weeks the council started a healthy snack area with just \$35. Council members volunteer to keep the snack area stocked and teachers have access throughout the day. They have heard many comments about how teachers appreciate having healthy options when they forget their lunch or do not have time to bring lunch from home.

Staff also wanted to move more so dance classes and a partner walking program were launched. Dance classes were taught by staff members who are avid dancers and who volunteered their time. The dance class met once a week after school. They have learned several line dances as well as other popular group dances. They planned on having a “dance recital” at the end of the year and inviting the students to the performance.

The wellness council measured a path inside the building for the walking program so if it was too cold, hot or raining outside they could still walk inside. The school feels that the wellness council has been a valuable asset to the school, which is located in a very rural area with limited access to restaurants, stores or exercise facilities. They believe that the hard work and dedication of the wellness council.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Blossom Gulch Elementary School

Coos Bay School District 9

Coos Bay, Oregon

“If we can start when kids are young with building the consistency and routine of regular exercise and making healthy choices, we will create the habits of a lifetime,” said Paulina Korving, Blossom Gulch parent and school wellness council member.

Blossom Gulch Elementary, selected as a Healthy Kids Learn Better school in 2004, has had an active school wellness council with a formal action plan in place for the last five years. They feel that the structure provided by this model (similar to and a nice segue for them into the Healthy Schools Program Six Step process) and the dedication of their school wellness council has been “pivotal in our goal to stay the course.”

As part of their evolving efforts, the wellness council learned about how essential it is to secure partners and financial support from outside the district for wellness policy implementation and sustainability. They have taken this to heart and are now the recipients of a number of grants that are helping them meet their action plan goals.

Some of the local resources they have cultivated to help implement healthy changes include funding from the Oregon Department of Education to provide a fresh fruit for every student, every day and a grant to hire their first physical education teacher, after 25 years without one. They are now able to schedule 150 minutes of PE each week for 1st-4th graders. They have also secured funding to release teachers to work on health standards, curriculum development and training opportunities as well as to provide incentives for a running program for students and to offset the cost of swimming lessons for every student for two weeks each spring.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Oregon City High School

Oregon City School District 62

Oregon City, Oregon

Oregon City High School is not a newcomer to implementing school wellness programs. Several years ago, the school participated in a “Healthy Kids Learn Better” project which built a strong foundation for its work in the Healthy Schools Program. As wellness has become more and more of a priority, the school has continued to make changes towards becoming a healthier school community. They started by replacing soda with water in the vending machines for both students and staff. Along with this switch came a push for staff to drink more water. According to Jamie Lee, health education teacher, “Drinking more water is a healthy behavior change for many at the school.”

To entice staff to drink more water, the school wellness council put together a water-drinking contest and the school provided funding to purchase water bottles for the staff. Water filters were installed in key areas around the school. Each week staff can enter their name into a drawing for prizes. According to the wellness council, participation has been good but the best outcome is having the students see that the staff are interested in wellness and that water is the healthiest choice.

The school wellness council is also working to build a wellness library to meet the needs of the staff. “In the past, we have tried afterschool exercise classes. However, due to attendance and space constraints the efforts were not successful,” said one member of the school wellness council. With the library, staff can checkout a variety of books ranging from health and wellness topics to cooking, exercise DVDs and exercise equipment. Besides helping staff become healthier, the wellness council’s goal is that the library will have residual effects—allowing family members of the staff to also participate in the exercise and benefit from healthier cooking.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Sacramento Elementary School

Parkrose School District 3

Portland, Oregon

Inspired by the movie “Mad Hot Ballroom,” which is about young students learning the art of ballroom dance, Principal Blakely secured a grant to have all 5th graders learn ballroom dancing this year. Because she was asking the 5th graders to do something new, Principal Blakely felt it was only fair to have staff try it as well, so she arranged for all staff to have seven weeks of dance instruction after school. Now the teachers are having fun doing the foxtrot and swing and getting a great workout.

Sacramento’s cafeteria adheres to strict nutritional standards. There are no vending machines or snack bars for additional purchases, and every day there is a salad bar for students including carrot sticks and fresh fruit. All students drink 1 percent milk and are offered two different vegetable choices with their non-fried entrée. The salad bar is very popular, and students often eat their fruits and vegetables before the rest of their lunch. Students are asked to only bring in healthy, portion-controlled snacks for birthdays or even to forgo food and opt to play a special game of the birthday child’s choosing. Some classes just have a monthly celebration called a “compliment ceremony,” which recognizes that birthdays are about people, not snacks.

Based on the results of a staff wellness survey, the wellness council organized new activities this year such as a pedometer challenge and group sports such as volleyball. They had a successful “Healthy Holiday Challenge,” with 75% of staff participating and competing against each other from Thanksgiving through December. A staff walking group takes advantage of a park across the street from the school for its weekly walks. Sacramento attributes their success to a strong and dedicated school wellness council and administration.

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Crescent Elementary School

Raleigh County School District

Beckley, West Virginia

One of the healthy successes physical education teacher Jane Sutphin is most proud of is the intramural program which she developed for the winter months when inclement weather often keeps students indoors all day. Students come to the gym during recess time where they can participate in basketball, volleyball, Dance, Dance Revolution or Wii games. They can rotate to different activities throughout the 30 minute period.

Students also select which games they would like to compete in and Sutphin organizes them into teams, secures gym space and works with the teachers to let the students out of class to come participate. Sutphin hopes to enlist another teacher to help next year but for now, organization and flexibility are key. When the program ended students were both sad to see it go but happy that warmer weather meant more outside time to play.

For the past five years Crescent Elementary has participated in a program called PEIA (Public Employee Insurance Agency) Pathways to Wellness. The program brings annual health screenings to participants in addition to two behavior change programs each year which focus on physical activity and/or nutrition. This year the staff embarked on a weight-lifting program in January and a water-drinking/physical activity program in April.

Sutphin said, "As a staff, we have taken a renewed interest in improving and maintaining our health through our staff wellness program. The health screenings have resulted in more than one of us being alerted to health problems that needed immediate attention. By participating in the behavior change programs, we are improving our health while setting an example for our students of the importance physical activity and making wise nutrition choices."

Success Story **Bronze Award**

Sophia Soak Creek Elementary School

Raleigh County School District

Sophia, West Virginia

Thanks to a seasoned physical education teacher who has mastered the art of grant writing, students and staff at Sophia Soak Creek are enjoying numerous activities to help keep them active. They have just received a \$5,000 local grant to use towards building a paved walking track around the playground that will be open to the community.

To secure this grant, teacher Karen Bonnett tapped into her student wellness committee which consists of ten 4th and 5th grade students. The students provided input on playground improvements and drew pictures to submit with the grant application. Students at Sophia Creek also have the opportunity to join a fitness elective class where they can participate in additional physical activity opportunities and lessons on wellness in addition to their physical education program. Students have explored other innovative tools in their physical education class such as “Body Sox” for creative dancing, “Speedstacks” for dexterity and mental concentration and “Dance, Dance Revolution,” for rhythmic coordination. The school is using JAMmin’ minutes in the classrooms and has created an indoor fitness trail.

Additional grants have been used to purchase equipment for a fishing program, circuit fitness stations and the Nintendo Wii. Students are using the Wii in PE class, the afterschool program, and have done demonstrations for parents at a PTO meeting. This year, Bonnet received another grant to do more outreach with parents on nutrition. She held an evening event called “Size Down with Proper Portions,” to give instruction on proper portion sizes.

Success Story **Silver Award**

Durfee School

El Monte City
El Monte, California

The goal of creating a healthier school began a few years back at Durfee when the administration began the training of all teachers in the SPARK physical education program. The school hoped to revamp their entire physical education program and ensure that the students were actively engaged in various activities that would help to promote a healthier lifestyle for all. Through this initiative they have seen a major transition in how physical education is both taught and received. Teachers have now incorporated dance, track and field events and the use of the school's fitness lab into the rotations of activities.

The next step towards meeting the school's plan for a healthier school for staff and students was to partner with the district's nutrition department to implement the Guest Chef Program. Teachers prepare a lesson based on a chosen fruit or vegetable and the guest chef comes out and implements the lesson. The guest chef discusses the health benefits of the chosen ingredient and provides items for preparing a recipe with it.

Another healthy eating activity organized by the nutrition department is a weeklong cooking camp that takes place the first week of summer school. Students from the district are invited to participate in a class taught by our home economics teacher through the support of our district nutritionists. The students learn to prepare healthy alternatives and finish their experience by preparing a meal for their family. In addition, the school received United States Department of Agriculture funding to provide every student with a fruit or vegetable snack every Friday. Durfee believes that all of these programs create wonderful opportunities for students to try a wide variety of produce and discover some new favorites.

Success Story **Silver Award**

Rio Hondo School

El Monte City
Arcadia, California

“At Rio Hondo, staff and students alike are becoming more fit and living more health-oriented lifestyles. On any given day you can look around campus and see staff members taking a walk with co-workers on their lunch breaks, students making healthier food choices in the cafeteria and staying after school to participate in cross-country or the Fitness Club, and staff members stopping in the hallways to congratulate each other on their weight losses or trading exercise or nutrition tips. This is all a direct result of the programs we have put in place, and it’s created a healthier, happier school culture for everyone.”

—Erin Brown, eighth grade science and physical education teacher

Rio Hondo has a very supportive group of teachers who have worked hard to help the students find more opportunities for physical activity. The Kindergarten teachers insisted that they be part of the physical fitness in-service when the principal left them off the list. First grade teacher Diana Elliott organized and ran a Walk-a-Thon for the primary grades. Donna Gannon, a fourth grade teacher, put together a Junior Olympics. The fourth and fifth grade classrooms represented different countries and the students participated in various events. Students received medals and recognition for their participation.

The administration at Rio Hondo uses a phone system to communicate with families. Based on input from the school wellness council they decided to add a wellness message every time an information message goes out over the phone. Fitness and wellness articles are included in monthly newsletters. To encourage families to do more physical activities together the school added a father/daughter dance and a mother/son bowling event to the calendar.

Success Story **Silver Award**

George Washington Carver Elementary School

Dade County
Coral Gables, Florida

The second year of participating in the Healthy Schools Program brought a renewed sense of energy for working towards a healthier school. “Winning the Bronze Award and advertising the recognition helped motivate individuals,” said Dr. Carlos Insignares, school counselor at George Washington Carver.

This year the school decided to focus on healthy fundraisers, staff wellness and expanding their school garden. The school participated in their second annual walk-a-thon, an event that was a terrific fundraiser and community event that encouraged students to live actively. Much to their surprise, the community rallied around this event and a national company even donated fresh fruit and prizes for the participants.

The wellness council is committed to assisting teachers become healthy role models for their students. They started sending daily articles to staff that focus on health topics such as dealing with stress, proper portion sizes and the importance of staying hydrated. In addition, during the morning announcements the principal offers a few healthy living tips to keep students and staff thinking about healthy living. This year the staff also decided to take on a friendly pedometer competition to determine which staff member is truly the most active.

Success Story **Silver Award**

Miami Edison Middle School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

Students and staff at Miami Edison were able to spend “An Afternoon in Dante’s Kitchen” this year. Chef Dante Neyra presented a cooking class at the school designed to teach simple, healthy meals that anyone can cook at home. With ingredients and spices donated by the community, approximately 35 students and 15 staff members enjoyed preparing and then eating bruschetta margarita, spaghetti aglio e olio and pollo in salsa di panna saffron.

The school also invited a speaker from the health department to present workshops to students and staff on healthy eating, food labels and portion control. They held two 45-minute discussions where everyone could ask questions and participate.

Staff from the health department returned to Miami Edison for the school staff health fair. Practitioners performed numerous health screenings and were available to answer questions. The nurses plan on returning to the school every 60-90 days to follow-up with school staff. The school was also able to acquire weight lifting equipment for staff to use onsite, which the staff appreciates. One teacher said, “Getting the weight equipment was a positive reinforcement for workout routines at the school site. This gave me the opportunity to workout at my school instead of traveling to a local gym.”

Success Story **Silver Award**

Silver Bluff Elementary School

Dade County

Miami, Florida

“No more excuses—we’re on our way to getting fit!” exclaimed Anilene Marban, computer teacher at Silver Bluff. The school wellness council attributes their successful year to their commitment to promoting wellness among faculty, students and parents.

Televised mid-day physical activity breaks have become routine during the school day. The cafeteria is offering more healthy snacks for students such as apple slices, grapes and yogurt. The staff has also become accustomed to the low fat and fat-free selections available in the teacher’s lounge. Before school Friday morning fitness routines have energized students and warmed up teachers for the workday to come. Staff are also enjoying wearing their pedometers and competing against colleagues to see who can get the most steps in.

The school feels that by achieving the Bronze National Recognition Award last year they have been able to unify their efforts and reinforce support for their working towards the Silver award this year. They believe that both teachers and students have become better educated on the important role wellness plays in their daily lives. According to 4th grader Trent Rolle, “I think it is very important that students eat right and exercise, and I’m not just saying that because my dad is the PE coach.”

Success Story **Silver Award**

Kenly Elementary School
Hillsborough County School District
Tampa, Florida

“Look what I have! Can you believe it? A tuna salad!” said one excited second grader the first time a tuna chef salad was served in the lunchroom. Over the past year at Kenly, tuna was slowly added to the menu twice a month and then three times a month with concerns that the kids would not choose it. However, lunchroom staff have found quite the opposite and they plan to offer a tuna dish once a week next year.

School staff and faculty also have something to be excited about—a Latin dance program that is helping everyone reach their fitness goals. With financial assistance from their insurance company, the school teamed up with surrounding schools to offer the “Dance 4 Wellness” program. Each week the participants get together to share nutrition and exercise tips and then work on their Latin dancing. Those that regularly participated each week for three months lost an average of 12 pounds. Many have continued their healthy habits since the program ended. Mary Melvin, chair of the school wellness council, shared that when they started the program in January she was averaging less than 5,000 steps a day and now she is averaging at least 9,000 and has many days where she gets over 12,000 steps. “I know I will be a better role model for the students and will live a longer and happier life.”

Students and staff at Kenly also had an opportunity to learn more about health and wellness during the “Great American Teach In,” a week in November where people from outside the school are invited to come speak about their professions. This past year the school received 99 speakers who all presented on health and wellness topics such as nutrition, heart and bone health, diabetes and bicycle safety.

Success Story **Silver Award**

Northeast Elementary Magnet School

Danville CCSD 118

Danville, Illinois

Staff at Northeast say they are looking forward to the day when their students do not know anything but the healthy life. They feel like they are on their way to reaching their goal as their efforts to create a healthier school are starting to be viewed as the “norm” and not a short-term project.

To continue down this path to success, the staff have been working on a number of improvements. Efforts were made to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. They were able to increase physical education time and now all students at Northeast have daily physical education. Exercise breaks are now part of classroom planning and teachers found creative ways to add movement time to the classroom setting.

Since this is a magnet school, parents sign a contract for their children to attend. The school plans on including a provision in the contract next year that parents will agree to provide a healthy lunch for their child. This year, parents were asked to only send healthy snacks and treats to school and they complied.

Northeast has found that parent involvement, communication and buy-in to the program are key. They admitted this was a struggle when the program first started. They have seen more parental support this year as they added more activities to celebrate their successes and have emphasized just how fun a healthy school can be!

Success Story **Silver Award**

Dr. Albert M. Bean School

Pine Hill Borough
Pine Hill, New Jersey

“Keep it simple and try it, you might like it!” is the motto adopted by the school wellness council at Dr. Albert M. Bean after a year of trying out new things and learning a lot along the way. They have found that small changes can go a long way in making a big difference and that creating a healthier school environment does not have to cost a lot of money.

One of the simplest changes they have enjoyed this year was implementing the “JAMmin’ Minute” program. The “JAM” program, as they call it, has made a major difference in how students start their day and how they view physical activity. The whole school gets up and moving together every morning with different teachers leading the exercises over the intercom. Teachers also incorporate the movements during the day. To spice it up a bit they have added the “Cha Cha Slide” on Friday mornings to show students that dancing is a fun way to get more physical activity into their day. Physical education teacher Linda Simek said, “I just love seeing the JAM in the morning. The students are exercising in the classroom and the hallways. It’s a great way to start the day!”

Although some were skeptical that students would eat more salads if they were served, the council was pleasantly surprised to find how popular they were when offered as a trial item last year. This year they added a salad entrée with a protein to the daily menu for students, which continues to be a big success. Dr. Albert M. Bean has also continued a successful healthy snack program where students who bring a healthy snack get to enter a weekly drawing for a prize. Parents report that their children are now requesting healthy snacks!

Success Story **Silver Award**

John H. Glenn Elementary School

Pine Hill Borough
Pine Hill, New Jersey

When going for the Silver National Recognition Award, the wellness council at John H. Glenn found that they needed to sustain the programs and changes made last year and try to expand upon them while keeping momentum and excitement high. They were able to do this with several new strategies focused on keeping students and parents involved.

Every Friday morning the school comes together to do the “Cha Cha Slide” which they follow on televisions in the classrooms. The students of the month appear on camera, dancing along with the rest of the school. More and more teachers are looking for additional physical activities to do with their students. Some are going outside to walk around the track. Another class does balancing routines. They are looking into offering a yoga class for students as well. Staff have taken to walking the halls in the morning to get some extra steps in and they are looking into having students join them.

Student input was solicited to help generate new ideas for the breakfast and lunch menus. The wellness council surveyed the 5th grade students and was surprised to see suggestions that included the terms “low calorie” or “sugar free.” They have compiled the student survey data and are looking into adding healthy choices such as fruit and yogurt to the vending machines. Jamie Rule, parent representative to the school wellness council shared, “I feel our wellness committee has accomplished providing our students with the knowledge and know how to make healthier lifestyle choices. As a parent, I am very proud of our school and its achievements.”

Success Story **Silver Award**

Memorial High School

West New York Town School District

West New York, New Jersey

Teacher Randi Cabana thought it would be a good idea to take the school wellness club (students) and wellness council (faculty and staff) on a field trip. She wanted them to partake in an activity together that would be physically challenging so she planned a trip to Harriman State Park. The trip was a great success despite the fact that the fitness levels of the participants covered the spectrum from poor to high. Cabana said that many students who were not physically fit felt like they achieved a great accomplishment and some said they would like to do more hiking.

Students and staff are both getting in shape after school with teacher Segundo Broncano. He hosts a fitness club twice a week where he teaches basic stretching techniques and circuit training for students of all fitness levels. On three days a week, he hosts Segundo's Boot Camp with three sessions per day with up to 15 participants per session. Attendance continues to grow for the boot camp and he always reminds his classes that they are role models for their students and families and that they must practice what they preach.

A company donated pedometers to the school and all staff members were invited to participate in a "Walk across America" challenge. The student wellness club members were also given pedometers. Everyone tracked their mileage and realized just how much or how little they walked in a day which inspired some to make a greater effort to walk more and to take the stairs. Students and staff started taking extra walks around the field to increase their number of steps. The pedometer challenge, boot camp, fitness club and field trips are all helping to make Memorial High School more active.

Success Story **Silver Award**

WNY Public School Number 5

West New York Town School District

West New York, New Jersey

The West New York school district is fortunate to have numerous Healthy Schools Program advocates that help keep the momentum going and excitement at high levels. At PS #5, Principal Israel Rodriguez is “our biggest advocate and goes above and beyond what an administrator is required to do in assisting our programs.” Physical education teacher Brian Cooney is also a leader in the school’s efforts to get everyone eating healthier and moving more.

Thanks to Cooney, students at PS #5 participate in a morning wellness program for one hour before school, three days a week. Students learn about reading nutrition labels, the components of fitness and the correlation between healthy food choices, physical activity and academic achievement.

This year Cooney introduced the Nintendo Wii in physical education classes. Dance Dance Revolution was also a big hit with the students. The PTO purchased the system, along with four arcade dance pads and 30 practice pads. Cooney used the dance game during staff wellness programs and turnout increased each time. PS #5 also offered Latin dance classes for students and staff this year.

The school received a Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Grant from the USDA which has “taken PS #5 by storm.” Each week students have the opportunity to eat fruit and/or vegetables that they are not likely to taste at home.

Success Story **Silver Award**

Forest Avenue Elementary School

West Babylon

West Babylon, New York

The wellness council at Forest Avenue focused their implementation of healthy programs on fitness breaks this year. Now every classroom, K-5, provides a short activity break for students on a daily basis. These breaks allow students to stretch, dance or just move around. They have found that when the break is over the students are more focused and ready to complete their school work.

Some teachers are doing yoga with the students. Others prefer taking walks outside. The first grade students in Jackie Palagye and Kristen Wilken's class do jumping jacks while reading their sight words. As teachers strive to balance academics with student health everyone can agree that all of the students benefit from the additional physical activity and the fitness breaks are a big hit with both teachers and students. The school has also started an intramural program that meets twice a week and offers a variety of team sports in a non-competitive atmosphere to encourage broader participation from students.

The school has also moved away from celebrating every student's birthday and instead holds one "Celebration Day" every month to honor all the birthdays that fall within that month. The parents are asked to communicate about the snacks in advance to make sure that no more than one cupcake is served and many parents have been sending in fruit and vegetable platters for the students to enjoy. An additional benefit of this method of celebration is that if a student's family does not have the means to contribute, the child is still able to celebrate their birthday with his or her classmates.

Success Story **Silver Award**

John F. Kennedy Elementary School

West Babylon

West Babylon, New York

“If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em,” the saying goes. At a time when many are concerned about the amount of time that children and adolescents are spending playing video games, JFK Elementary School has decided to embrace video game technology or “exer-gaming” as a way to get kids more active.

A 5th grader at JFK Elementary wrote a convincing essay which secured a \$5,000 grant from Nickelodeon’s “Lets Just Play” initiative. The concept was to build a “Healthy Technology Room” where students can learn how to use the video games they love to be active. The room is for the physical education teachers to use and to incorporate into their lessons. The products purchased promote games that encourage movement as opposed to games that promote sedentary behavior. The teachers plan on using heart rate monitors (acquired through a PEP grant) when students are exergaming to provide feedback to the students regarding their training heart rate zone.

Staff at JFK have also been moving with a program entitled the “Skyscraper Climb Challenge,” a program that promotes physical activity through stair climbing. During a 25-day period, twenty-two employees climbed 102 flights of stairs to the top of the Empire State building which was the first skyscraper in a series of four. Several employees completed the climb in just four days. Six teachers completed all four towers in 25 days.

Tracking graphs were used and displayed in the hallways. Children were checking teachers’ tracking graphs each day and cheering on their favorite teachers. Some children have even brought the challenge into their own homes. In the end, JFK employees climbed 4,888 flights of stairs.

Success Story **Silver Award**

Santapogue Elementary School

West Babylon

West Babylon, New York

After receiving the Bronze National Recognition Award last year from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Santapogue decided that the next big step in improving the health of their school community was to address snacks. As with most schools, teachers at Santapogue were accustomed to seeing cakes and cookies brought in for birthday parties and other unhealthy snacks packed in students' lunches. The wellness council set out to write and implement a healthy snack policy for the school.

With help from the Healthy Schools Program Resource Database and the competitive foods and beverage manager, the school developed a policy to send home to parents. They created additional materials to teach both parents and students about the need for healthy snacks as well as providing them with lots of ideas for healthier options. There is now a push throughout the district to adopt a district-wide healthy snack policy.

As with other schools throughout the West Babylon school district, Santapogue has agreed to be a part of the student ambassador program which they plan to officially launch in the fall. The goal is to expand the reach of the Healthy Schools Program by activating more students as leaders in the movement to create a healthier school environment. They hope that the new student ambassadors will take the lead on ensuring that the new healthy snack policy is a great success for the school.

Success Story **Silver Award**

South Bay Elementary School

West Babylon

West Babylon, New York

For the wellness council at South Bay, moving from the Bronze award level to Silver meant moving staff, students and parents forward with their healthy changes. There was more work to be done in increasing physical activity levels, replacing cafeteria food selections and changing other long-standing traditions.

One of these traditions was that of students bringing sweets to school for their birthday. The school has worked to end that practice and to replace those sweets with non-food treats. Some examples they encourage with staff and parents include a craft project, game time, inviting a special guest to read a book to the class, or letting the birthday boy/girl be a special helper for the day.

They have encouraged students to get involved in the decision-making process regarding cafeteria food options. They have held food tastings for both menu and snack items and shared student feedback with the food services department who continue to work to eliminate less healthful choices. Samantha Lobasso, a 5th grader at South Bay shared, "The cafeteria should definitely have watermelon and different color apples and types like Gala and Empire and bigger servings of fruits and vegetables."

The wellness council has found that educating parents is key to success. They said that although some of the healthier food items are more expensive, they have been able to convince parents, administrators and teachers that the positive outcomes outweigh the difference in cost. PTA President Diana Doerbecker said, "The wellness program in our district is a wonderful thing. We are teaching our children from a young age that healthier choices will benefit them throughout their lives."

Success Story **Silver Award**

Tooker Avenue Elementary School

West Babylon

West Babylon, New York

“Here at Tooker, we feel that everyone has ‘bought’ into the healthy school philosophy by now so we need to go a step further and get people more involved in the process, rather than putting the process in place for them. Our focus has been on employee wellness and student involvement.”

—Jennifer Autera, school nurse

Tooker Avenue is reaching out to students through the student ambassador program. Students from the student council received training and staff are coordinating with the high school health ambassador program so they can come to the school to meet with the younger students. The goal is to inspire the elementary school students and to empower them to take ownership of the Healthy Schools Program at Tooker.

Faculty and staff are also taking ownership of their personal health by participating in an afterschool yoga class and sharing healthy recipes once a week. This year they worked to create an online eBoard for staff to post health tips, reminders and recipes with quick and easy access for all staff members.

Last year, Tooker was able to transform its PE curriculum from the traditional team sport model to a new curriculum based on wellness, adventure education and social skills with funding from a PEP grant. The curriculum included new activities such as riding mountain bikes and climbing a man-made rock wall. The new curriculum engages and supports all students, not just the athletically talented ones. Similarly, the school offers non-competitive intramural sports afterschool.

Success Story **Silver Award**

West Babylon Senior High School

West Babylon
West Babylon, New York

More than 25 students at West Babylon High School recently participated in the “Healthy Alliance Ambassador” training, an effort to create student leaders to sustain the school’s efforts and renew commitment without using the same resources or consistently tapping the same people for help. The students will work with schools across the district to spread the message about healthy eating and physical activity to their younger peers. Every school is excited about activating the students as leaders—they believe it is a great opportunity for the students’ personal growth as well as the best way to keep the program going.

This year the kitchen staff at West Babylon agreed to post the fat, calorie and protein count of the lunch wraps on the wall so that students can make informed choices. All snacks sold at the school are portion controlled (100 calorie packs). Beverage options include low-fat milk, water, juice and sports drinks. They use the in-house news broadcast show, “Wake Up West Babylon,” to share news about healthy changes that they make.

The student association hosted a “Healthy Choices Poster Contest” with prizes available for the winners. Teachers offered extra credit for those who participated. The winning design will become the cover to the healthy cookbook they are creating. The cookbook will feature healthy recipes submitted by staff, students and community members and will be sold next year at many school functions as a healthy fundraiser.

Success Story **Silver Award**

Inborden Elementary School

Halifax County
Enfield, North Carolina

Hoping to motivate staff and students to get moving, the wellness council at Inborden decided that the school should make the trek to Africa. They determined that it was about 7,765 miles from Inborden to Nairobi, Kenya and each class was given a pedometer to track steps. They measured the steps from the classrooms to other key points in the building so they could easily keep track of every step and convert those steps into miles. They also incorporated lessons about African culture and geography into the program.

All classes at Inborden recently had a chance to visit a local grocery store to learn about healthy food choices. The school used a resource called the Field Trip Factory that helps arrange free and educational field trips for schools. Schools can download permission forms and classroom materials to use before and after the trip to reinforce the lessons. The Inborden students attended the "Be a Smart Shopper!" tour at a nearby Lowe's grocery store.

A trained tour guide gave a 60-90 minute grade-appropriate tour of the store and shared information on healthy snacks, meal preparation, heart health and fitness. Students sampled healthy snacks and were given a bag of souvenirs to take home. One student shared that he liked the yogurt and pretzels the best.

Success Story **Silver Award****Scotland Neck Primary School**

Halifax County

Scotland Neck, North Carolina

This year Scotland Neck decided to “spark” up their physical education program by using a local grant to purchase the SPARK (Sports, Play & Active Recreation for Kids) program. Staff had the opportunity to participate in a workshop to learn how to use the equipment and implement the curriculum. They feel that the program has given them the opportunity to merge physical movement with academics on a daily basis. One teacher shared, “I enjoy using the quick set up activities from the SPARK program for my students. It’s a research-based curriculum that is aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study that integrates with other subjects.”

Students now have an opportunity to receive more than an hour of physical activity during the school day. Many classes are incorporating extra walking during class time. They select local places to visit and find out how many miles away they are. They walk one mile at a time until they reach their goal. If possible, they try to actually visit the place as well.

When the students go home at the end of the day, the staff keeps moving. The school wellness council sets up physical activity stations after school to help staff stay active and reduce fatigue and stress. Staff members say they enjoy the opportunity to end the day socializing with colleagues. One participant said, “We never get bored because the wellness council keeps adding interesting and challenging activities.”

Success Story **Silver Award**

Farmington Elementary School

Shelby County

Germantown, Tennessee

Thanks to the creativity of one food service manager, fourth grade students at Farmington Elementary are exploring topics in food nutrition during a monthly school nutrition council meeting. Donna Wall, food service manager, chooses a different topic each month such as fruits and vegetables or beverages and uses books, flyers and magazines in her lessons about healthy eating. The meetings close with an activity and a healthy snack. One example is when, in observance of Dr. Seuss' birthday, the students created a large banner for the school and ate green eggs and ham.

Farmington Elementary has a very involved parent teacher association which has been instrumental in planning active events for the school. This past spring they held a "Mother-Son Olympics," which gave mothers the chance to be physically active with their sons. The teams rotated through different stations such as basketball, Frisbee toss, obstacle course and wheelbarrow races. A rest station provided fruit and water to the participants.

In addition, every month Farmington Elementary participates in a walk to school event involving students, parents, the local parks and police. It is a community event that takes a great deal of coordination and logistical planning, spearheaded by the parent teacher association. According to Chris Shumaker, assistant principal at Farmington, "While Farmington prides itself on its innovative, educational and comprehensive programs offered for our school community, our Walk-to-School event offers another opportunity to involve everyone while accomplishing goals toward health and wellness. We are proud of this program."

Success Story **Silver Award**

Sherman Elementary School

Eau Claire School District

Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Sherman's school wellness council has found success through best practices such as including the Healthy Schools Program as a standing agenda item at the PTA monthly meetings. Partnership Coordinator Kim Winkelman said, "Our progress and ideas have been very well supported by our PTA and many members are starting to make suggestions about how to have more healthy and active PTA functions. Ideas have included offering a family sports night with fruit and frozen yogurt as snacks, bingo nights with healthy food choices, and a 'Family Hoe-down' dance."

Sherman continues to build on the success they have had with the "Safe Routes to School" program. They established safe routes in the local area for students and parents to use. Tangible improvements have included new signage throughout the school community and new crosswalks and bump-outs designed to keep the students safe. New bike racks are being installed to accommodate the growing number of students who choose to bike to school.

Sue Brown, food service director, and Lisa Smith, kitchen manager, have been committed to supporting the school meals criteria in any way possible within their budget. In the past year, they have increased the whole grain products offered, now exceeding 50% of the grains on the menu. "The Alliance has given us the ability to assess what's really important and strive towards our goals. Our vision is to educate EVERYONE about the importance of healthy living and eating," said Winkelman.



ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION'S HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation joined forces in May of 2005 to create a healthier generation by addressing one of the nation's leading public health threats—childhood obesity. Along with our co-leader Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California, the Alliance works to positively affect the places that can make a difference to a child's health: homes, schools, restaurants, doctor's offices and communities.

The Alliance launched its Healthy Schools Program in February of 2006 to support schools across the country in their development of healthier school environments. The program takes a comprehensive approach by helping schools improve access to healthier foods; increase both physical education and physical activity opportunities before, during and after the school day; enhance nutrition education; and establish staff wellness programs.

Schools participating in the Healthy Schools Program are eligible to earn bronze, silver, gold or platinum awards based on their range of healthy eating and physical activity programs and policies. The rigorous program criteria—known as the Healthy Schools Program Best Practice Framework—were developed in consultation with a panel of experts, including representatives from the American Heart Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, RWJF and others. For individual school wellness council members at participating schools who are leading their schools toward these sustainable healthy changes, the Healthy Schools Program offers the Champion Award to select, outstanding leaders from Healthy Schools Program schools across the country.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the major funder of the Healthy Schools Program. Many other foundations and individuals also support the work of the Healthy Schools Program, including the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Kessler Family Foundation, MSST Foundation, Lincy Foundation, Ann & David Brennan Family Foundation, Kresge Foundation, The California Endowment, Health Foundation of South Florida, Missouri Health Foundation, Peacock Foundation, Healthcare Foundation of Kansas City, Dolby Family Foundation, Frankel Family Foundation, Ella Fitzgerald Foundation, Andersen Foundation, and John Connors.

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