Spring 2009

BUILDING A SYSTEM OF PREVENTION

A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Countywide Prevention Newsletter

Special Spring Edition

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COORDINATOR CORNER

- Denise Raybon

Welcome to our Spring issue of the Countywide Prevention Newsletter. This is a special edition focusing solely on physical fitness, nutrition, and other healthy habits. The growing obesity epidemic in our country has the potential to impact the health, well-being, life-span, and economy for several generations if a strong prevention approach is not adopted. In the past three decades, the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled for preschool children ages 2-5 and tripled for children ages 6-11. Therefore, more children are being diagnosed with weight-related diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. These health problems are likely to continue into adulthood. Some estimates show that the obesity epidemic will shorten our lifespan and suggest that, without some intervention, today's children will have shorter and less healthy lives than their parents for the first time in modern history.

Beyond the health consequence of childhood obesity, research has shown that children who are overweight are often victimized by their peers and are more vulnerable to depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. They are also more likely to perform poorly in school.

In Fairfax County, we are working on numerous fronts to ensure that our residents have the skills

needed and the access to resources to build their own healthy habits. Building healthy habits in individuals requires a multi-faceted approach focusing on improving skills and knowledge, examining cultural norms and role models, limiting screentime, and improving access to physical activity and convenient, nutritious food. The Fairfax County Partners in Prevention Fund (a fund that includes money from multiple human service agencies) trained nearly 100 individuals in the *We Can!* programs last fall and also funded four organizations to provide those programs in the community. One of those organizations is featured in this newsletter.

Building healthy habits and improving access is the responsibility of all of us. Integrating messages and skill-building into our daily programs and services is easy and the pay-off for our community will be immense. Make use of the resources featured in this newsletter or feel free to contact me with questions or ideas.

Happy Spring. Get outside and enjoy it!

According to the 2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey

- Fairfax County youth spend about the same amount of time watching TV as their peers nationally, but spend more time on non-academic electronic activity.
- The percent of youth who eat 5 fruits and vegetables per day decreases with age from 30% of 6th graders to only 16% of 12th graders.
- Fairfax County youth are slightly more likely than their peers to meet the national recommendations for physical activity (at least 60 minutes on five or more days a week), however nearly 20% of 12th graders report no physical activity during the past 7 days.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

According to a local study on the weight and habits of children and youth in Fairfax County

- Fifteen percent of Fairfax County children ages 2 – 18 are overweight. Thirty percent of children ages 2-5 are at risk of becoming overweight.
- Over 40% of children and teens spend 4 or more hours a day in front of a screen.
- The epidemic (both nationally and in Fairfax County) has disparate impacts on various populations with inequities by race and income:
  - Twenty-one percent of those living below 200% of the poverty level are overweight.
  - African American youth and youth living under 200% of the poverty-level were less likely to eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables a day.

www.tippingthescales.net/theresearch.html

NORTHERN VIRGINIA HEALTHY KIDS ROLL OUT 9-5-2-1-0 FOR HEALTH

- Mary Nelms, excerpts from the Web site

On March 13th, 2009, the Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition held a *Community Kick-Off Meeting* to launch the web site for their *Tipping the Scales* campaign and to introduce the *9-5-2-1-0* for Health message. The core message for the Tipping the Scales for Better Health Campaign is *9-5-2-1-0* for Health. This message communicates five key behaviors which promote healthy weight and overall good health for children. Visit their Web site to learn more about how to get started making a difference!

9 - Get at least nine hours of sleep per day.

5 - Five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

2 - Limit screen time to 2 hours or less outside of school.

1 - Get at least 1 hour of physical activity per day.

0 - Eliminate sugar-added beverages.

WE CAN!

- Mary Nelms, excerpts from the Web site

We Can!™ or "Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition" is a national program designed for families and communities to help children maintain a healthy weight. The program focuses on *three* important behaviors: *improved* food choices, *increased* physical activity and *reduced* screen time. Read more about the program.

We Can! provides families and communities just like yours with helpful resources that you can start using today to help prevent childhood overweight. Learn how your family can start living more healthfully today.

Organizations in Fairfax County, through the Partners in Prevention Fund, are using WeCan! curricula to promote the healthy weight goals:

We Can! Energize Our Families: A Family Guide

CATCH Kids Club: Curriculum for Youth

Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!

Student Media Awareness to Reduce Television (S.M.A.R.T.): A Curriculum for Youth

We Can! Overview
We Can! Program descriptions and materials

WE CAN! PARTNERS IN PREVENTION PROFILE

- Soo Kim

Name: Boat People SOS

BPSOS has implemented **Media Smart Youth** at Holmes Middle School, parent program at Falls Church High School, parent program at Jeb Stuart High School, and Boat People Administrative Office.

Biggest Success Story:
After a ***We Can!*** Workshop presentation that was held for BPSOS employees, one employee commented that she had always known about Nutrition Facts Labels, but had never really paid attention to them. After the workshop however, she said ...

> I've not only talked about the importance of nutrition labels with my family, but I've also started to use the labels in making decisions about the food products I purchase while shopping.

The biggest challenge, particularly in the youth program, is actually challenging the youth to ***think beyond the lifestyle that they are used to*** at home and with their friends. For a large part of today's generation of youth, it has become the norm to stay indoors and become very dependent on many forms of electronics, particularly through the computer and video games for example. This unhealthy lifestyle is further worsened by a culture of fast food, whether at home or outside of the home.

For younger kids, it is harder to think about the long-term effects of such behavior and therefore requires a bit of extra creativity for them to think outside the box.

The great thing about the ***We Can!*** program is that it takes information that people (whether students, parents, or staff) are already generally aware of, and provides an opportunity for the information and its value to be discussed in a new light.

Through group discussions and the sharing of personal experiences with challenges, concerns, and successes, **the ultimate goal is to recognize and reinforce healthful actions** that are already being taken, **while helping people to acquire new skills** in working realistically towards goals of healthier lives for today's youth and their families.

We Can! Workshop Helps BPSOS-Falls Church Staff Learn Healthy Habits

FCPS WELLNESS POLICY IN THE ENERGY ZONE

-Penny McConnell, RD
Director, Food and Nutrition Services, FCPS

The Objective is to provide a variety of palatable, high-quality, safe, nutritious foods that students will enjoy eating at a price affordable to them.

-Penny McConnell

Fairfax County Public Schools operates "**The Energy Zone**", Food and Nutrition Services, under the philosophy **"we talk, serve, and teach nutrition."** This community nutrition program serves meals to a multigenerational, multicultural clientele including students, senior citizens, Meals on Wheels, Head Start and day care programs. The students personal and cultural needs are considered and no food item goes on the menu unless it has passed a student taste party. Special emphasis is placed on fresh fruits / vegetables, whole grains, zero trans fats, and reduced sodium. Dietary trends salads, hummus, and Yogurt Biteables are trademarks for our "grab and go" items.

The menus are planned by registered dietitians to reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and strict federal nutrient guidelines. Nutrient analysis and ingredient lists for all products served are available to parents to assist them with their students' special food sensitivities and therapeutic needs. The school division's competitive food sales regulation prohibits the sale of foods in competition with the school feeding program during the school day. ***Students may only select a la carte and vended items that meet strict nutrient standards for foods of minimal nutrient value recommended by the Institute of Medicine, USDA, and Virginia Governor standards***. Parents, students and teachers are invited to use the Easy Nutrition Calculator in evaluating their personal snacks.

The Fairfax County Public School Board adopted a Wellness Policy to promote student health and contribute to the reduction of childhood obesity. The Wellness Policy addresses the School Board Achievement Goals – **students will make healthy and safe life choices** and students will be respectful and contributing partners in their school, community, country and world.

The seven year old **Energy Zone Fitness Challenge** is a multifaceted nutrition and exercise program for Energy Zone team members, senior citizens, and teachers. It is voluntary and includes information to help participants plan a personal wellness program, including the Food Guide Pyramid, a fitness pyramid, suggestions for snacks and breakfast, and numerous health tips.

Parents are role models and have a major impact in their children's eating and physical activity patterns. The district provides nutrition education materials for students to take home, and monthly parent newsletters to educate parents on how to foster more healthful lifestyles in the home.

FCPS Wellness Policy Components

- Nutrition education that provides students the knowledge they need to adopt a healthy lifestyle through a balanced diet and regular exercise.
- Foods and beverages served / sold during the school day should reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and classroom celebration, fundraisers, and concessions at school sponsored events encourage healthy choices.
- Food environment provides adequate time to eat; promotes breakfast, recess before lunch stresses the importance of hand washing and sanitation.
- Physical Activity and Physical Education ensures students receive regular age-appropriate physical education. Elementary schools are encouraged to provide daily recess and before and after school programs include supervised age-appropriate physical activities. Schools provide information to families to help them incorporate physical activities into their children's lives and limit computer or TV time.

CLARIFYING STANCE ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

-Senator Ralph Northam, Virginia General Assembly

Senate Bill 1112 will soon become law, and will accomplish two things. First, it will change the name of the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Fund to the Virginia Foundation on Healthy Youth. Second, it allows for additional money obtained by the Foundation from private and public grants and gifts to be used for developing and executing programs to combat childhood obesity in the Commonwealth.

The VTSF has proven that its model for making kids healthier works: from 2001 to 2007 youth smoking in Virginia dropped from nearly 29 percent (on par with the national average) to under 16 percent (more than 4 percent lower than the national average).

This not only kept thousands of kids from becoming addicted to nicotine, but also saved us a lot of money in health care expenditures.

Following the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, this means that programs like those administered by VTSF will actually lower your taxes, rather than increase them.

According to a study by the Virginia Commission on Youth, obesity among adolescents in the U.S. tripled from 1980 to 2000, rising from 5 percent to 15 percent, and continues to increase.

We all benefit from helping each other live healthy lifestyles. For a little investment up front, we can avoid much greater costs down the road, and make our children into smarter, healthier, more productive members of society.

"Because of the seriousness of the childhood obesity problem in America, we thought it was wise to apply the successful VTSF approach here as well."

-Senator Ralph Northam

Eastern Shore News, March 11, 2009
Related article News & Messenger, January 26, 2009

HEALTHY CHILDREN, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES:
A LEARNING SERIES ON STRATEGIES TO REDUCE AND PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

- The Michigan Public Health Training Center

Free Online Course

Healthy Children, Healthy Communities brings together specific strategies and interventions directed at reducing and preventing childhood obesity. The focus areas include promoting physical activity and healthy eating in children and families; changing school environments to increase physical activity and healthy eating; and regional and community approaches to increase physical activity and healthy eating.

This course is focused on the rising epidemic of obesity, especially among children, and the strategies to reduce and prevent childhood obesity. As an online learner, you will explore experts' multi-faceted efforts to promote both physical activity and healthy eating. At the completion of this course, you will have a greater awareness of the issues and a framework for community and organizational actions and strategies on this topic.

Register online: www.mitrainingcenter.org

NATIONAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH & FITNESS DAY: SHAPE UP & LIVE WELL

-Sharon Arndt, Fairfax County Health Promotion and Privacy Coordinator

National Employee Health & Fitness Day™ (NEHF) will take place on Wednesday, May 20, 2009.

NEHF, held the third Wednesday of May each year, is a national health observance, created to promote the benefits of physical activity for individuals through their work site health promotion activities.

The Live Well Program will be hosting a day-long wellness symposium in conjunction with National Employee Health & Fitness Day, at the Fairfax County Government Center on May 20.

Employees should dress to be active! Door prizes will be offered throughout the day!

Workshops Session A

- Healthy Sleep
- Balanced Nutrition
- Healthy Bones
- Health Maintenance for Men
- Energizing our Families

LiveWell
Fairfax County · Workforce Wellness Program

Workshops Session B

- Keep Fit in a Fattening World
- Migraine Management
- Asthma & Allergy
- Better Living Through Chemistry
- Center Your Energy

NEHF Schedule and Workshops—Fairfax County Infoweb

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT: NUTRITIONISTS DEFINE HEALTHFUL FOOD

- Prevention Institute Alert, March 24, 2009

Last week, Prevention Institute and Strategic Alliance released the sign-on letter, Setting the Record Straight: Nutritionists Define Healthful Food.

Motivated by concern over issues like food safety, industrial agriculture practices, climate change, and deceptive food marketing, health and nutrition professionals developed **Setting the Record Straight** to establish a clear, comprehensive definition of healthful food. Our definition looks beyond nutrients to acknowledge that **truly healthful food** comes from a food system where food is **produced, processed, transported,** and **marketed** in ways that are **environmentally sound, sustainable** and **just.**

Are you a health or nutrition professional? Prevention Institute and Strategic Alliance invite you to endorse *Setting the Record Straight*! With your support, we will add to the growing momentum urging government and industry to promote policies and practices that create a sustainable, equitable, and healthful food system.

Setting the Record Straight—full article

FAIRFAX COUNTY'S HERSHEY'S TRACK & FIELD MEET

-Fairfax County Community & Recreation Services

Every year, the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS) sponsors the Fairfax County Hershey's Track & Field Meet. This program promotes physical fitness through basic track and field events and encourages children to be the best they can be. The event is FREE and open to kids ages 9 through 14. Approximately 700 youth and their families participate each year and REGISTRATION is required.

We feel that this event is a great opportunity to reach youth and families to promote the benefits of healthy lifestyles and the many assets and resources available in the county to help them achieve healthy lifestyles.

In addition to the games CRS sponsors:

- **A resource fair** to display flyers and other information for programs promoting health and wellness in Fairfax County.
- **A "door prize" program** where we would give away items (e.g., water bottles, t-shirts) that promote organizations and programs, to randomly selected participants.

Contact

Chris.Pulley@fairfaxcounty.gov

Fairfax Community and Recreation Services

MAY 2009

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31						

Falls Church High School
May 15, 5 p.m. (9-10 yr. olds)
May 16, 9 a.m. (11-14 year-olds).

Hershey Track and Field Games

HOLMES MIDDLE SCHOOL HEALTHIER LIVING FAIR

-Sarah Astrow, Parent Liaison Holmes Middle School

MAY 2009

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Holmes Middle School
May 16, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

6525 Montrose St
Alexandria, VA 22312

Holmes Middle School is sponsoring a Healthier Living Fair on May 16, 2009.

Some featured organizations that will be represented are NVCC Medical Campus, Lion's Hearing and Vision Van, Velocity Performance, Let's Dish, martial arts, Nadar Por Vida (swim for life), Annandale Neighborhood Center, James Lee Center, Gold's Gym, Fairfax County Government prevention services, Safe and Drug Free Youth Office, Health Source (no smoking campaign), AMERIGROUP, Hispanics against Child Abuse, Holmes Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences and Physical Education departments, and much more.

Visit the Auxiliary Gym for Brazilian Juijuitsu and Wii.

Contact

Sara Astrow
Parent Liaison
Homes Middle School

Phone: 703 658 5933

CONTACT US:

ARE YOU TALKING PREVENTION?

Send us an update on how you are spreading the word about prevention or furthering the prevention system goals for our *Summer* newsletter.

Submit articles to Mary Nelms *by June 27, 2009.*

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We hope you find this newsletter useful. Feel free to forward it to others who may also make use of the information included.

To request the information in an alternate format, contact Mary Nelms.

A Publication of Fairfax County, Va.

VISIT OUR WEBSITES

www. fairfaxcounty.gov/dsm/prevention

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey