Project Healthy Schools Goals

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Make better beverage choices
- Include at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week
- Eat less fast and fatty food
- Spend less time in front of the TV and computer

PHS will reach 330 sixth graders in Lincoln this year. 117 participated in a baseline screening. Of those, 30 had health risks outside the normal range and a physician followed up with these families.

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Memorial FIT Kids wins national award

In February, PHS partner, Memorial FIT Kids, received a national award for their work with PHS. They were among 10 programs from across the country named a “Program of Excellence” by the Hospital Charitable Service Awards, a national program sponsored by Jackson Healthcare. The award for their efforts in addressing childhood obesity in Shiawassee County earned Memorial FIT Kids a $10,000 prize.

The press release put out by Memorial Healthcare noted that Memorial FIT Kids implemented Project Healthy Schools’ curriculum and attributed much of its success to PHS and the staff at the University of Michigan. Memorial Healthcare Foundation also provided $80,000 to continue the Memorial FIT Kids program through 2013 and expand it to all 11 schools in the Shiawassee County region.

Health teams work to create healthy changes

Health teams exist, or are being formed in all PHS schools. A health team is an essential part of creating a healthy school environment. While each school’s team may have a different composition of members, meeting times and goals, they all function to accomplish specific objectives related to the health and well-being of the school.

Ideally, a health team should consist of a PHS staff member, a school administrator, a physical education teacher, a health education teacher, the school nurse, a parent, the school food service manager, a counselor, and students. PHS staff helps with team formation, then a chair or co-chair is appointed from the school staff. Often, a school’s PHS Wellness Champion serves as the team leader.

The health team is the internal driving force for wellness at the school, which is very important and helps keep the creation of a healthy school environment a priority. Health teams help PHS:

- Assess the current school health environment and identify opportunities for change.

(See Health teams, on back page)
As PHS expanded into more diverse communities with higher concentrations of African American students, the PHS curriculum needed adjustments to address not only the diverse culture of Detroit, but also the relationship with food, its history, access, and associated cultural norms.

PHS’ Detroit staff created and altered several lessons for the Detroit schools based upon feedback from Detroit students and staff. Two new lessons, “I Am From” and “Jumpstart Your Day” were created. “I Am From” aims to explain how food is culture and creates links between agricultural cycles and food traditions. The lesson also helps students to discover food traditions in their own family.

“Jump Start Your Day!” was developed because a survey indicated that most students were either not eating breakfast, or making poor choices when they did eat breakfast. The lesson helps students understand the importance and the benefits of eating breakfast, identifies the obstacles to eating a healthy breakfast and demonstrates ways to overcome these obstacles. It also gives examples of healthier breakfast options. Other activities were adjusted to use culturally appropriate food items familiar to students.

PHS also hired a PhD student from the U-M School of Education to review the updated PHS curriculum for cultural competency. The student, who has years of experience working in Detroit and developing culturally sensitive curriculum, observed classrooms, interviewed administrators and staff, formed focus groups and evaluated PHS new curriculum in both Detroit and Willow Run. Her consultation activities culminated in an extensive report which included many recommendations that have been successfully implemented.

Creating culturally competent PHS curriculum

PHS publications and presentations

Project Healthy Schools research was very well received this past term. Two articles were published in national scientific magazines:

- Understanding Childhood Obesity in America: Linkages Between Household Income, Community Resources, and Children’s Behaviors. (Published in American Heart Journal)
- A Public School District’s Vending Machine Policy and Changes over a Four-Year Period: Implementation of a National Wellness Policy. (Published in Public Health—2012)

Several PHS abstracts were presented at the American College of Cardiology in March:

- Immediate Impact of a 10-Week Middle School Intervention to Improve Health Behaviors and Reduce Cardiovascular Risk Factors – Project Healthy Schools in Michigan. (Oral presentation)
- Gender Differences in Physiologic Markers and Health Behaviors Associated with Childhood Obesity. (Poster presentation)
- Response to a School-Based Wellness Intervention Program in Four Communities with Differing Resources. (Poster presentation)

Three abstracts were accepted as poster presentations at the American Heart Association Quality of Care in Outcomes Research Conference and will be presented in Atlanta, Georgia in May:

- Middle School-based Intervention Leads to Improved Behaviors: A Report from Project Healthy Schools.
- Racial Differences in Physiological and Behavioral Responses to School-Based Wellness Program.
- Self-Efficacy and Cardiovascular Health in Sixth Graders: An Insight from Project Healthy Schools.
Nutrition and physical activity impact academic achievement

PHS researcher and Pediatric Cardiologist, Caren Goldberg, M.D., recently reviewed the existing literature around the impact of nutrition and physical activity on academic performance. She says, "Parents will be interested in knowing there really are some lifestyle habits related to diet and exercise that, not only will improve their child's health, but also are likely to improve their child's ability to succeed in school.

"Research has shown that eating breakfast is helpful to improve energy level and to enhance a child's ability to do the routine work required by school. Does eating breakfast translate into better test scores and grades? More research is needed, but most people believe that eating breakfast is crucial to how children think during the school day," says Goldberg.

PHS Participating Schools

Ann Arbor Open School
Ann Arbor - Clague Middle School
Ann Arbor - Forsythe Middle School
Ann Arbor - Scarlett Middle School
Ann Arbor - Slauson Middle School
Ann Arbor - Tappan Middle School
Corunna Middle School*
Detroit - Henry Ford Academy
Detroit - University Prep Academy Middle School
Detroit - University Prep Science & Math Middle School
Detroit - YMCA Detroit Leadership Academy
Harper Woods - Tyrone Elementary School**
Laingsburg Middle School*
Lincoln Middle School
Ovid-Elsie - E.E. Knight Elementary *
Owosso Middle School*
Owosso - St. Paul Catholic School*
Perry Middle School*
Royal Oak Middle School**
Willow Run Intermediate Learning Center
Ypsilanti Middle School

* In partnership with Memorial FIT Kids, funded by Memorial Healthcare Foundation in Owosso, Michigan.
** In partnership with Beaumont Health System and Children’s Miracle Network.

Harper Woods holds Junior Chef Day

Chartwells food service and Project Healthy Schools teamed up to organize a Junior Chef Day in Harper Woods in January 2012. Three students at Tyrone Elementary, a Project Healthy Schools site, were selected as “Junior Chefs” after finding stickers on the bottom of their school lunch plates one day in early January. The Junior Chefs created a healthy meal of salad, chicken fingers, fresh fruit and vegetables which was served to the student body at the end of January.

The Junior Chefs helped serve the meal to the other students and handed out samples of fresh sautéed spinach, watermelon and strawberries prepared by Chartwells. Beaumont Health System, Chartwells and University of Michigan staff members assisted with the event. Chartwells Food Service Director, Brian Corbett, says "This was an exciting event to witness — students choosing to eat different fruits and vegetables!" The Junior Chef Day program was also implemented at Beacon Elementary in Harper Woods. The students loved this program and can’t wait for it to happen again in the spring!
Health teams

- Develop and implement action plans for healthy changes.
- Oversee the school health environment.
- Plan school health events like fairs and taste tests.
- Create buy-in for the program from the school, students, parents, and community.
- Promote school commitment to improving students' health

Most of the school health teams meet once per month, which allows time between meetings to complete action steps. Some of the most meaningful school health initiatives at PHS sites have stemmed from the school health teams. Examples of some of the successes over the years include:

### Physical Activity
- Organizing an annual 5K walk/run.
- Holding open gym nights for students and families.
- Establishing school participation in Relay for Life.
- Organizing events for Walk to School Day and All Children Exercising Simultaneously (ACES).

### Healthy Eating
- Collaborating with PTSO to promote healthier fund raisers and with other school groups on healthier concession stand items.
- Arranging a school-wide healthy snack contest.
- Promoting an “I Got Caught” being healthy campaign.
- Running a healthy Fun Night with a health expo and healthy food/beverage options.
- Promoting Farm to School samples and chef demos.

PHS is pleased by both the creativity and the variety of achievements from the health teams. The goal is for the health teams to continue to foster a culture of wellness at their schools even after the PHS staff turns responsibility for the school’s PHS activities over to the school’s Wellness Champion. Of course, PHS will still be available to answer questions and to coach from the sidelines.

### Beard Foundation gift funds physical activity in Willow Run

A generous gift of $20,000 from The Robert Beard Foundation will allow PHS to offer additional healthy eating and physical activity opportunities for Ypsilanti and Willow Run students. Through a partnership with the YMCA, Project Healthy Schools will provide Willow Run Intermediate Learning Center students with low or no cost after school recreational programming. This gift will support an after school bus to help eliminate transportation as a barrier to participation, and help with class fees, if needed. No student who wishes to participate will be turned away. In addition, the Beard Foundation gift will provide weekly fresh produce bowls, and support Farm to School and community gardening activities in Willow Run and Ypsilanti area schools.

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**Thank You PHS Supporters!**

**Thank you for your on-going support:**
- AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation
- Champions for Charity
- Memorial Healthcare Foundation
- Thompson Foundation
- University of Michigan Health System

**Thank you for your recent donations:**
- The Robert Beard Foundation
- The Inman Family Foundation
- Ashish Sarkar

For a complete list of donors visit [www.projecthealthyschools.org](http://www.projecthealthyschools.org)