**Project Healthy Schools Goals**

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Make better beverage choices
- Eat less fast and fatty food
- Spend less time in front of a screen
- Be active every day

**Did you know?**

- PHS is piloting a high school version of the program at Medicine & Community Health Academy at Cody High School in Detroit.
- In November, PHS Program Manager Jean DuRussel-Weston spoke at the 141st annual meeting of the American Public Health Association. Her topic was, “Increasing Heart Healthy Behaviors in Middle Students through School and Community Collaboration.”
- As a continuation of last spring’s Pass on Pop challenge at Tyrone Elementary School in Harper Woods, the school no longer offers pop at any school party or event!

**Eight new schools start PHS as part of BHC**

This fall, eight new Michigan middle schools started Project Healthy Schools (PHS) as a result of the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) program, a partnership between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Michigan Fitness Foundation, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, University of Michigan and Wayne State University. The BHC program, which started in 2009, originally focused on creating healthy school environments and establishing healthy life styles among elementary school children. With the addition of U-M’s Project Healthy Schools to the partnership, 20 middle schools will receive the PHS program as part of BHC by 2016. The first eight schools started this fall:

- Britton-Deerfield Schools: Deerfield Building, Deerfield
- Bryant Middle School, Dearborn
- T.L. Handy Middle School, Bay City
- Mason Middle School, Waterford
- Noble Elementary-Middle School, Detroit
- Romulus Middle School, Romulus
- Summit Academy North Middle School, Romulus
- St. Thomas the Apostle School, Ann Arbor

In August, an orientation was held for principals and wellness champions from these schools. Four people from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan also attended.

The orientation was held to:

- familiarize attendees with PHS

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Memorial FIT Kids’ PHS program receives award
By Vicki Hemenway

Memorial Healthcare’s FIT Kids program, funded by the Memorial Healthcare Foundation of Owosso, Michigan, was recently awarded the Innovations in Health Care Award from the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan and its partners, in recognition of excellence in projects for implementing healthy behaviors.

In 2008, Memorial FIT Kids piloted the Project Healthy Schools program with sixth grade students at Corunna Public Schools to conduct cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factor assessment followed by 10 weeks of in-class, interactive health education. Following the 10-week education program, students were re-tested to evaluate behavioral changes and health perceptions and to determine if CVD risk factors had decreased or increased. The Memorial FIT Kids’ program has expanded to include 10 area school districts and has touched 10,449 lives.

Memorial FIT Kids received this recognition, along with $1,000, for their dedication to projects that promote making healthy choices, specifically related to the four health behaviors of Governor Snyder’s 4 x 4 plan - maintaining a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, getting an annual physical exam, and quitting smoking.

“The Memorial FIT Kids program is dedicated to improving the health of the Shiawassee region’s youth through education and screening,” says Rebecca Dahlke, Facilitator of the program. “Results continue to show that the Project Healthy Schools program is making a positive impact in participants’ health. We anticipate this trend will continue as we strive to develop new and exciting ways of expanding this national award-winning program,” adds Dahlke.

To learn more about Memorial FIT Kids, visit memorialhealthcare.org.

Hat Day at Lincoln raises money for PHS supplies

Lincoln Middle School’s wellness team hosted a hat day on Friday, October 25th to raise money to cover the cost of supplies for this year’s PHS lessons at the school.

All sixth- through eighth-grade students could pay $1 to wear a hat for the day. While many students chose to wear a baseball cap, some kids and teachers were more creative, sporting fun hats like fedoras, and headbands covered with fruit.

The school’s wellness team hosts a couple of hat days each year to help raise funds to sustain the PHS program. In total, this event raised about $170 dollars.

Once the PHS program reaches sustainability, the school takes over responsibility for providing disposable PHS lesson materials, such as food and paper products. Other schools have raised money by holding 5K events; after-school yoga classes; or by selling items, for example Scarlett Middle School in Ann Arbor sold Halloween grams with a pencil this year to raise money.
Study reveals gender-related differences in obesity risk factors

While some habits, such as eating school lunches and viewing two or more hours of TV daily were the same for all overweight and obese children, a new study by the University of Michigan Frankel Cardiovascular Center published in the September issue of Pediatrics found some gender differences in the habits influencing body weight.

For example, data from 1,714 sixth grade students enrolled in Project Healthy Schools showed girls who drank two servings of milk each day were less likely to be obese, and boys who played on a sports team were also at a healthier weight.

Milk consumption seemed to protect girls from obesity, but made no difference for boys. A possible explanation would be a reduction in sugary drinks, which girls replaced with milk.

Students enrolled in sixth grade at 20 schools in the southeastern Michigan communities of Detroit, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Owosso were eligible for participation in this study. The median age was 11.

Obese boys and girls had poor cardiovascular profiles with lower HDL-cholesterol, higher triglycerides, higher blood pressure and higher heart rate recovery – indicating a lower level of fitness – compared to normal weight kids.

“Cardiovascular disease doesn’t just start in adulthood, and there may be factors that could help us identify during youth or adolescence who might be at increased risk for developing health problems later on,” says cardiologist and senior study author Elizabeth Jackson, M.D., M.P.H., assistant professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School.

42 Participating PHS Schools

Project Healthy Schools (PHS) is lucky to have volunteer Maria Cornellier! She has been a PHS Health Ambassador since September 2012, which means she has taught over seventy-five sixth-grade students about the importance of healthy living!

Cornellier, a registered dietitian, says she learned about PHS when she and her family participated in Ann Arbor Skyline High School’s Ready, Set, Fly 5K event in May 2012. The event raised awareness and funds for PHS. “That is when I decided to volunteer as a PHS Health Ambassador. I thought it would be a great opportunity to get experience working with adolescents, helping them to understand the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity,” said Cornellier.

Volunteer “Health Ambassadors” teach scripted PHS lessons once a week for 10 weeks in the Ann Arbor Public Middle Schools. Some Health Ambassadors, like Cornellier, are health professionals, others are parents, community members, U-M students, and even a few select high school students who are part of Skyline High School’s Science of Wellness program. All attend a training session, are observed teaching by a PHS staff member, and receive supervision from a middle school teacher.

Cornellier grew up in a family of backyard gardeners who gathered for meals prepared with produce from their gardens. She believes in “understanding where your food comes from.” Maybe this explains why the PHS lesson, “I am From,” that discusses food culture and has the students write a poem, is her favorite. Cornellier shared her poem, above, with sixth-grade students to inspire them to write their own poems.

PHS is grateful to Cornellier and all the other health ambassadors who volunteer to teach PHS lessons and help make the program sustainable in the Ann Arbor schools.

Health Ambassador helps sixth-graders learn healthy lifestyles

I am From Poem

I am from the smell of slowly baked oven roasted chicken and fresh vine ripe tomatoes.

I am from the taste of fresh homemade dill pickles.

I am from the sight of enjoying backyard picnics with grandparents and family at our home.

I am from the sound of prayers before dinner.

I am from the touch of tearing crisp tasty lettuce for salad.
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through interactive demonstrations
• explain the role of the wellness champion in more depth
• explore ways principals can best support wellness in their schools
• provide an opportunity to meet PHS staff and network with the other schools that are participating in the program.

After receiving overviews of BHC and PHS, attendees divided into two breakout groups. The wellness champion group participated in a PHS lesson and a scavenger hunt through the wellness champion toolkit to help familiarize them with all the useful information in this wonderful resource. The principals joined in a guided networking and brainstorming session to discuss wellness related topics and challenges at their schools, and ways to overcome possible obstacles to the successful implementation and sustainability of PHS in their schools.

It has been a very busy fall at these schools, starting with introducing PHS to parents and staff at school registrations and open houses in August and September.

By now, most schools have:
• formed wellness teams and held a first meeting
• put up healthy bulletin boards
• met with food service directors to introduce PHS and discuss opportunities for collaboration
• held a PHS Kickoff event
• started teaching PHS lessons

Some of the schools have already incorporated healthy food tastings in their cafeterias, held an event like a Turkey Trot to promote physical activity, or participated in National Walk to School Day.

Thank You PHS Supporters!

Thank you for your on-going support:

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
Bob and Ellen Thompson Foundation
D. Dan and Betty Kahn Foundation
Memorial Healthcare Foundation
University of Michigan Health System
Wetsman Foundation

We are also grateful to the many other corporations, foundations and individual donors who have supported PHS over the years.

Information on how to donate is available at www.projecthealthyschools.org

Project Healthy Schools: 734-764-0246, www.projecthealthyschools.org