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 participated in a family-oriented Farmers Market on Wednesday evening, June 26 in Ann Arbor.
- Jean DuRussel-Weston, PHS program manager, completed a half marathon in San Diego, California on June 2.
- Cortney Boes, PHS health educator completed the Ann Arbor Marathon on June 9.
- PHS recently hired Kathy McCarthy as a program assistant to help with the eight new BCBSM funded schools that will start PHS this fall.

BCBSM to partner with PHS in 20 schools

The University of Michigan is now a partner in Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan’s (BCBSM) “Building Healthy Communities” program, along with Wayne State University, the Michigan Fitness Foundation and the United Dairy Industry of Michigan. With this new partnership, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) has committed to adding Project Healthy Schools (PHS) in 20 schools over three years.

“The University of Michigan is excited to work with so many partners across the state to create healthy school environments. The long-term benefits of this program cannot be understated in terms of its potential to improve the overall health of our citizens today and into the future; reduce health care costs that will benefit all of us; and help generations of Michiganders live healthier, more successful lives.” said Kim Eagle, M.D., A. Walter Hewlett professor of Internal Medicine, and director, Samuel and Jean Frankel Cardiovascular Center, University of Michigan Health System. Dr. Eagle is also a PHS co-founder.

Building Healthy Communities is a comprehensive, school-wide program created to fight childhood obesity. Since the inception of the program in 2009, the program focused on elementary schools. With the addition of the University of Michigan’s Project Healthy Schools, it will now also include middle schools.

PHS will begin implementing the program in eight new schools starting in the fall of 2013. Eight more schools will be reached in the 2014-
Since 2005, PHS' dedicated research team has developed over 75 papers and/or presentations on various topics related to school-based interventions for reducing childhood obesity and its long-term consequences. Below are the most recent PHS conference presentations.

American Heart Association Quality of Care in Outcomes Research Conference, Baltimore MD, May 15-17th PHS presentations included:

- Behavioral Factors as Predictors of Poor Cardiovascular Health in Middle-School Students: Results from Project Healthy Schools (PHS)
- Breakfast Habits and Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Middle School Children
- Level of Participation in Health Screenings as a Predictor of Behavioral Outcomes in Middle School Children: A Report from Project Healthy Schools
- Prevalence of High Health-Habit Achievers Among Middle School Children and Associated Measures of Cardiovascular Health: A Report from Project Healthy Schools

Internal Medicine 21st Annual Research Symposium, University of Michigan, May 16th and 17th PHS Presentations included:

- School-Based Intervention Incorporates Farm to School Programs to Highlight Healthy Eating: A Report from Project Healthy Schools
- Sustainable Practices within a School-Based Intervention: A Report from Project Healthy Schools

The fourth semi-annual wellness champion meeting, held in early May, was attended by eight wellness champions from five school districts. The semi-annual gatherings bring wellness champions together to share best practices, receive additional training and encourage networking between schools. At the May event, participants:

- Were recognized for their accomplishments with ‘paper plate’ awards.
- Participated in a toolkit scavenger hunt to help everyone get familiar with all the great information and resources available in the Wellness Champion Toolkit.
- Shared information about best practices, lessons-learned, biggest challenges and fund-raising ideas.
- Took part in a ‘Prop Challenge’ where teams competed to assemble the correct props for the PHS lesson called Better Beverages. This activity illustrated the importance of getting familiar with the lesson materials in order to tell if something is missing or not put together correctly.

Wellness champions said they were inspired by the many concrete ideas that were shared at the meeting, and they enjoyed getting to know each other better.
School gardens in Detroit

Gardening is really catching on in Detroit! Almost all of the PHS Detroit schools now have some type of gardening program, thanks to grants from the Thompson Foundation, the American Heart Association (AHA), and help from PHS.

At Henry Ford Academy (HFA), PHS Wellness Coordinator, Alison Heeres, joined seventh-grade science teacher Ms. Barbee to co-teach lessons on garden bed planning, and assisted in planting cold crop transplants and spring seeds. PHS collaborated with HFA and the College for Creative Studies to build, install, and plant the beds. Now PHS is working with HFA’s curriculum to make gardening part of HFA’s seventh-grade science curriculum.

PHS used a nearby community garden for a joint garden club between University Prep Science and Math (UPSM) and University Prep Academy (UPA). Garden Club gave students the opportunity to plant, play garden games, and learn about how various plants grow.

Throughout the summer, PHS is holding weekly family garden nights where families can help tend the community garden and take home summer produce. PHS also held a summer camp with both UPSM and UPA students. The three half-day camp held at the Michigan Science Center focused on growing, harvesting and cooking with Michigan vegetables.

Since the YMCA Detroit Leadership Academy (YDLA) doesn’t have space for a garden, PHS used portable bag gardens to teach YDLA students gardening skills.

International Prep Academy at MacDowell (IPA) and Detroit International Academy for Young Women (DIA) are part of Detroit Public Schools' garden program. PHS is less involved with the gardens at these schools, however PHS did provide garden supplies purchased with the AHA grant.

Events continued from previous page

Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies (HFA) in Detroit held its second annual 5K event on April 18. The 5K was a great success, with almost 800 middle and high school students and teachers participating. Teachers from each grade ran or walked with groups of students through a course that wove through Wayne State’s campus. At the end of the race, students received oranges and water and played sports like touch football and soccer in the parking lot. The top five male and female finishers received t-shirts.

Over 400 students, parents and teachers participated in University Prep Science and Math Academy’s (UPSM) first annual 5K run on June 7. Participants ran and walked a 5K course within the school’s Detroit neighborhood. At the end of the race, everyone received 100% juice boxes and healthy snacks like granola bars. The top five finishers from each grade earned track and field gold medals. All students and staff received t-shirts. Following the race, students participated in field day games including tug-of-war, volleyball, hula-hooping, and a double-Dutch jump rope contest. Everyone had so much fun that they plan to make this an annual event.

41 Participating PHS Schools

Project Healthy Schools Locations

Ten new schools will start PHS this fall, including Carman-Ainsworth Middle School in Flint, Larson Middle School in Troy and the eight new schools mentioned in the BCBSM article. This brings the total number of PHS schools to 41 as of fall 2013.
2015 school year, and four more will be added the following year.

“The scope of this partnership is the first of its kind in Michigan designed specifically to help students in elementary and middle schools learn healthy behaviors and practice those lessons in an environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice,” said Shannon Carney Oleksyk, a registered dietitian and healthy living advisor for the Blues’ Social Mission. “All the evidence shows that when children are healthier, they are more likely to succeed in the classroom and beyond. By encouraging kids to make healthy choices at a young age, the Building Healthy Communities program is laying the foundation for a healthier, stronger Michigan future.”

Including the eight new PHS schools, Building Healthy Communities will be in twenty-eight school buildings and reach nearly 13,000 students in the 2013-2014 school year. To date, over 35,000 students in 83 schools have benefitted from the Building Healthy Communities program.

“Partnering with Building Healthy Communities is an important step in encouraging even more students to become healthy by eating well, exercising, and making healthy choices,” said Jean DuRussel-Weston, manager of Project Healthy Schools. “Building Healthy Communities will help Project Healthy Schools expand to more schools across the state. With its public, private and nonprofit partners, Building Healthy Communities is having a positive impact on helping students to make healthy choices at a time when one in three children in the nation are obese or overweight and when the rate of childhood obesity has tripled in just 30 years. We are excited to be included in this partnership which shares the PHS goal of reducing childhood obesity and its long-term health risks.”

A generous donation from the D. Dan and Betty Kahn Foundation will help cover PHS core program costs for the next three years.

The PHS core program provides consultation and training to school coordinators and wellness champions, continuously improves the program with new activities and materials, brings school coordinators and champions together to learn and share, and conducts quality assurance activities and data reporting. This is a vital resource, the heart of the program, which keeps PHS expanding to reach more children and make a positive difference in their lives. PHS is so thankful to the Kahn Foundation for their support.

Patti Aaron, trustee of the Kahn Foundation and a PHS Advisory Board member said, “The decision to support Project Healthy Schools was the result of three key factors: Dan and Betty Kahn's admiration and respect for the work of Dr. Kim Eagle, who established PHS; the track record of successful results achieved by the PHS program in schools throughout Michigan; and the Kahn Foundation’s mission to support local initiatives which enhance the well-being of communities.”

Thanks to the Kahn Foundation’s generous gift, PHS will be able to continue in its mission of providing a healthier future for more children.

Thank you for your on-going support:

- AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- D. Dan and Betty Kahn Foundation
- Memorial Healthcare Foundation
- Thompson Foundation
- University of Michigan Health System

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