Project Healthy Schools Goals

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Choose less sugary food and beverages
- Eat less fast and fatty food
- Be active every day
- Spend less time in front of a screen

Did you know?

- The PHS 10 year anniversary celebration is being rescheduled to spring 2015. Stay tuned for details.
- Katelin Davis and Erin Hinga are new PHS Wellness Coordinators. They joined PHS this summer and fall, respectively, to help support the BHC schools.
- Project Healthy Schools was mentioned in an article on Fortune.com. The article is about food service start-ups benefitting from the Obama administration’s new school lunch regulations. One of the vendors, Edibles Rex, that PHS works with in the Detroit schools is featured. Read the article at https://fortune.com/2014/10/17/school-lunch-obama/

Gov. Snyder announces state support of BHC schools

On September 5, Governor Rick Snyder joined partners of the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) program to announce 58 schools across the state who will receive the BHC program. Thirteen of the schools are implementing Building Healthy Communities: Engaging Middle Schools through Project Healthy Schools this fall. Snyder said, “The State of Michigan and Department of Community Health are pleased to partner with so many communities and schools across the state to help our children make healthier choices.”

BHC is a partnership between the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM), the Michigan Fitness Foundation, University of Michigan, the United Dairy Industry of Michigan and Wayne State University. The BHC partnership encourages children to adopt healthy habits. The University of Michigan’s Project Healthy Schools joined the partnership last year and currently has 21 schools supported by the BHC program.

PHS goes to the Upper Peninsula

In early November, PHS Program Manager, Jean DuRussel-Weston and Wellness Coordinator, Katelin Davis spent a week in the Upper Peninsula (U.P.) to begin implementing the Building Healthy Communities: Engaging Middle Schools in Project Healthy Schools program in Manistique Middle/High School and Father Marquette Middle School. These schools were among the thirteen schools chosen to receive the program when the Michigan Department of Community Health joined the Building Healthy Communities partnership.

Despite the arrival of 35 inches of snow while the PHS team was in the U.P., the trip was a success! The pair delivered all the program materials for the year, including props and disposables for lessons; they trained the teachers on how to deliver the PHS lessons; and they met with school administrators and (See Upper Peninsula on back page)
PHS program is self-supporting at Tyrone Elementary

Brenda Crane, a health teacher and the Project Healthy Schools (PHS) Wellness Champion at Tyrone Elementary School in Harper Woods, was walking out of a meeting at the middle school recently while the students were eating lunch. She said, “One of my former students comes running up with his plate of salad, and says, ‘I eat this now!’” She smiled, “I think he was one who spit out his salad when we did a spinach salad taste test!”

PHS started in Crane’s sixth-grade health class at Tyrone Elementary School three years ago as part of a partnership with Beaumont Health System. “The PHS program at Tyrone is now self-supporting,” says Hanna Reising, the PHS Program Coordinator for Beaumont Health System. Reising started in the position as Tyrone Elementary was entering into the second year of PHS. Reising says, “My main job was to help at wellness team meetings and to make the lessons easy for Brenda to teach. I made sure all the materials were ready to go and organized for her and I provided an extra set of hands to help during the really interactive lessons.”

Reising is quick to praise Crane, “Brenda is an amazing classroom teacher. She is a veteran teacher and she truly loves her students. I think her willingness to take charge and her positivity have really made it easy for the program to move into sustainability at Tyrone.

"Now, I check in with Brenda on a monthly basis just to make sure that everything is going smoothly,” continues Reising. “Brenda has kept me as an honorary member of the Tyrone Wellness Team, so she still sends me updates. If she or the team need my opinion, or need me to send them any resources, I do. I serve as a wellness consultant for them whenever needed."

Crane feels the best part of being a wellness champion is working with the wellness team. She says, “It is rewarding to see some lasting positive changes. I lead the Tyrone wellness team in assessing our wellness as a school and setting at least one student goal and one staff goal each year. As a team we coordinate our annual field day and do a ‘challenge’.

Crane adds, “I feel we have had a positive impact on the culture, and not just students, but adults as well. One of the members of our Tyrone Wellness Team is the Chartwells food service director. He has listened to our team for several years. This summer they did some remodeling of our kitchen and added a salad bar with fresh vegetables and fruit!”

Crane says one of the things she is most proud of is that, even before the federal mandates, Tyrone Elementary stopped offering sweetened carbonated beverages at the school. “One year we had a POP (Pass on the Pop) challenge encouraging students to not drink any pop for a month. We had great success with that and it became the initiative for making Tyrone a pop-free school. We always reward the students that have achieved their goal with a pool party at the high school,” adds Crane.

“It is hard to measure behavior changes, but our children really love that we often reward with physical activities,” says Crane. “The students love the taste testing and are always shocked by the better beverage lessons when they see how much sugar is actually in a can of pop!” continues Crane.

Crane has participated in some of the wellness champion meetings and networking events that PHS organizes to bring wellness champions from many different schools together. She says she has, “come away with some great ideas for fundraising and challenges and met some very inspiring and motivating people.”

When asked how her role has changed since the program transitioned to sustainability mode, Crane says, “The biggest change is that I have to gather all of the materials. Hanna is an email or phone call away and I have the utmost confidence in her, Beaumont and PHS support. The program is designed for autonomy and to wean you from support gradually. I am confident the PHS program will continue at Tyrone Elementary.”

Reising says, “Beaumont has enjoyed partnering with PHS. It’s a great program and we feel it has benefitted the schools in our service area. It’s important for Beaumont to make a positive impact on the health of our community and this program has been a way for us to do just that.”
Focus groups get student perspective on PHS programs

A few years ago Project Healthy Schools began offering additional environmental programs at several Detroit schools. To assess the effectiveness of these programs, Project Healthy Schools held a series of student focus groups at three Detroit middle schools: University Preparatory Academy, University Preparatory Science and Math, and Henry Ford Academy.

The focus groups were led by Emmaline Keely, a U-M senior participating in the Semester in Detroit program where she interned with Project Healthy Schools. The purpose of the focus group was to determine students’ perceptions of the additional PHS environmental programing at their schools and whether or not these programs helped motivate students to follow the five PHS goals. Between 10 and 12 students participated at each school for a total of 33 students.

The additional environmental programs at these schools included in-school cafeteria events, such as food-samplings, salad bar, chef demos, etc.; an afterschool Zumba/Cooking Class which included Zumba exercise followed by learning easy, no-cook recipes; a garden club; and the YMCA Boll Family afterschool program which provided students with additional physical activity opportunities including swimming. Focus group findings include:

**Zumba/Cooking Class** - Students felt motivated to be more active and reported being more conscious of the foods they consume.

**YMCA Boll Family Afterschool Program** - Students loved the program. It provided them with a safe atmosphere to be active and increased their confidence, especially in swimming.

**Garden Club** - Students enjoyed being outside and learning about composting. They felt motivated to eat more fruits and vegetables and reported spending more time in other home and community gardens after the club.

**In-School Cafeteria Events** - Students stated that the salad bar was the best tasting food in their schools. They reported consuming more fruits and vegetables because of the salad bar.

The focus groups suggest that extra PHS environmental activities are successful in motivating healthy behaviors and promoting the PHS goals, however, more research is needed to determine which aspects of these programs make them successful.

MCORRP summer internship research projects

Each summer, the Michigan Clinical Outcomes Research and Reporting Program (MCORRP) hosts an internship program. In addition to lectures and shadowing experiences, students assist in data abstraction and entry on multiple registries, including the Project Healthy Schools database. Students are also required to conduct research on the databases and present a project at the end of the internship. This year, four students chose to pursue PHS research projects:

- **Alexis Coolidge**, a senior at Middlebury College in Vermont, observed trends in the body mass index (BMI) of sixth grade students over the course of the ten years of PHS.
- **Lauren Gordon**, a returning MCORRP intern, and recent graduate of the University of Michigan, explored the effects of mobile device usage on physical activity and other screen time habits.
- **Jordan Jabara**, a sophomore at Kalamazoo College, focused his research on the breakfast habits of middle school children. He observed the changes in breakfast habits before and after the PHS intervention and compared the characteristics of students who ate breakfast with those who did not.
- **Sara Turner**, a recent graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, looked at parental education levels and divided students into two groups: those with parents with a high level of education (college degree or above), and those with parents with a low level of education (less than a college degree). She then compared dietary habits and physical activity between these groups at baseline and follow-up.

Coolidge and Gordon have recently submitted abstracts of their summer projects to the American Heart Association Epidemiology and Prevention 2015 Scientific Sessions. They hope to have the opportunity to present their work in Baltimore in March. Jabara and Turner would like to submit their work to national conferences this year. Please keep an eye out for more about the results of their work in future newsletters!

The articles on this page were written by Rachel Sylvester, research coordinator.
wellness champions to answer questions and explain the wellness champion role.

A highlight of the trip was an invitation to the home of Manistique Middle/High School Co-Wellness Champion, Laurie Johnson, R.N., for a home cooked dinner, followed by completion of the wellness champion training.

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Amy Nixon and Laurie Johnson, co-wellness champions at Manistique Middle/High School, shared dinner with PHS team members Kate-lin Davis and Jean DuRussel-Weston.

Johnson had this to say about the PHS program, “I feel it is so important to educate and show children that there is a wide array of healthy and nutritious foods out there that actually taste good. It’s also important to show them how much fun exercise can be and how great you feel afterward. The benefits are a bonus. PHS has such a great curriculum with support and tools that are tried and true!”

Interview with a PHS Advisory Board member

The Project Healthy Schools (PHS) Advisory Board provides leadership, guidance and support for the PHS mission. This is the first in a series of interviews with PHS Advisory Board members, starting with Patti Aaron who has served on the board since its first meeting in March 2011. Aaron wears many hats, including community activist, philanthropist, entrepreneur and mother of three grown children, to name a few. She strives to bring together people of diverse cultures and socioeconomic status to address challenging social issues.

PHS: What prompted you to want to serve on the PHS Advisory Board?

I was delighted to be asked to be part of PHS’ Advisory Board for a number of reasons. I’m a big fan of Dr. Eagle and his tireless commitment to cardiovascular health. Also, I’ve been aware of, and distressed by, the epidemic of childhood obesity in our country, and particularly in our own state. And finally, I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of a concerted effort to bring much needed educational programming to schools in an effort to improve the health of our children.

PHS: What are you passionate about and how does serving on the PHS Advisory Board and supporting PHS fit in with your passion?

Those who know me well, will tell you there’s little about which I’m NOT passionate, but I’d put access to quality education at the top of my list. I believe education to be the gateway to economic self-sufficiency, to a broader understanding of the world at large, to a greater sense of community involvement. It’s so much harder to learn when the student is hungry and/or poorly nourished which makes PHS programming so valuable for student and teacher alike.

PHS: What was it about Project Healthy Schools that led you to want to become a supporter of the PHS program?

Like many who are fortunate to be able to financially support good causes, my support certainly follows my interests and passions. PHS, for all the reasons I’ve already indicated, is deserving of substantive financial support. The health and well-being of an entire generation of young learners is depending on it!

In addition to its focused mission (teaching youth healthy habits), I’m incredibly impressed with the energetic commitment and effective collaboration within the PHS professional team. I’m also excited that so many community partners like BCBSM, the Michigan Department of Community Health, Beaumont Health System, Memorial Healthcare, and many others share the vision and have chosen to join with this program to hopefully ‘move the needle’ and make measurable and sustainable change for the youth in our state.

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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