

Family and Community Health Sciences

School Wellness Annual Report

2008



Greetings from the Chair

I would like to welcome you to the premier issue of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Family and Community Health Sciences School Wellness Report. The purpose of this report is to highlight the various school wellness activities in which our faculty and staff have been engaged.

Members of the Department of Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) help people stay healthy, enjoy life, become active, and reduce health care costs. Many of today's health problems—obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer—can be reduced through good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. FCHS combines research and practical advice to improve consumers' health for a better tomorrow. FCHS faculty and staff offer a variety of programs to adults and youth. School wellness, in particular, is a key programmatic focus for our faculty and staff.

School wellness is the belief that schools can and must promote and encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and nutrition and physical education as part of the solution to the childhood obesity epidemic. The issue of school wellness impacts and engages a variety of stakeholders who have a role in leading, advocating for, and implementing wellness initiatives.

For years, FCHS has partnered with New Jersey schools to bring food and nutrition education to youth, teachers, foodservice staff, administrators, and school nurses. We know that, to be successful, a school wellness initiative should be creative, multi-dimensional, affordable, and manageable. This report highlights just some of the many projects and achievements of FCHS outreach in the area of school wellness.

For more information on FCHS school wellness programs, please visit our website at njaes.rutgers.edu/fchs.

Kathleen T. Morgan, Dr. M.H., DTR
Chair, Family and Community Health Sciences

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New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
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FCHS: New Jersey's Premiere Resource for School Wellness

Luanne J. Hughes, MS, RD: FCHS Educator

As a local authority on school-based wellness programs, FCHS has the tools to help schools develop and implement innovative school wellness initiatives. Our curricula and information are research-based and our programs can be easily evaluated to demonstrate impact.

A Healthier Future for New Jersey's School Children

Children who eat a healthy breakfast or a morning snack are more prepared to learn and have better school attendance, are calmer, and participate more in class. Well-fed and well-nourished children do better in school and on achievement tests.

To better support nutrition and physical fitness in our schools, the federal government now requires that school districts develop school wellness initiatives to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

FCHS educators and program associates help schools throughout New Jersey with a variety of wellness initiative needs:

- School wellness advisory council support and leadership
- Teacher and staff in-services
- Train-the-trainer workshops
- School foodservice initiatives and training
- Classroom lessons
- Original curricula: *From Our Farms, Jump Start Your Bones, Smart Foods Rock*, and more
- Library-based learning boxes
- After-school programming
- PTA/PTO workshops
- Parent and family activities
- Special programming for schools in limited resource communities

Rutgers Cooperative Extension's FCHS and 4-H Youth Development Collaborate to Present Get Moving–Get Healthy New Jersey

Through school wellness programs across the state, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, FCHS Educators, and 4-H Youth Development Agents are partnering together to play a strong role in improving the lives of young people through. One initiative, Get Moving–Get Healthy New Jersey (GMGH), brings messages about healthy eating and physical activity to residents across the state. The mission of GMGH is to improve the health of individuals, families and communities. GMGH encourages a healthy lifestyle, especially healthy eating and physical activity, through educational programs, a website, publications, targeted marketing campaigns, and school wellness projects. Rutgers Cooperative Extension works in partnership with state and local governments, research institutions, professional groups corporations, and private organizations to achieve this mission.

Many sectors of society, including families, communities, organizations, health care providers, faith-based institutions, business, government agencies, the media, and schools will be needed to play a role in reversing the epidemic of 'child obesity.' GMGH encourages and promotes strategies that New Jersey schools can use to improve student nutrition and physical activity. Through funding by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Adolescent Health, 36 Get Moving–Get Healthy Learning Kits were developed and disseminated throughout the state. These GMGH Learning Kits were key instruments in reaching thousands of New Jersey students with nutrition and physical activity messages. Through school wellness programs, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, FCHS, and 4-H are playing a strong role in improving the lives of young people throughout New Jersey by teaching them about the importance of healthy eating and the value of physical activity.



Learn more and join GMGH!

Visit our website at

getmovinggethealthynj.rutgers.edu

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Monmouth County School Wellness Project Scores an "A"

Sharese Porter, MPH, CHES:

FCHS Senior Program Coordinator

Rachel Tansey, MA: FCHS Program Associate

Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) in collaboration with local Cooperative Extension departments and community partners in Monmouth County provided a family enrichment program from October 2007 to April 2008 at Bolger Middle School in Keansburg, NJ. This initiative was partially funded by a Children Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) mini-grant. The educational sessions taught and reinforced health and nutrition messages amongst a diverse audience. Fifty families were serviced by the program and received certificates of completion. The program resumed this Fall, at which time, a six month follow-up evaluation will be conducted with intentions for the school to sustain the program.

Family nights offered sessions pertaining to healthy lifestyles and more nutritionally sound food choices for promoting healthier behaviors. Each evening included educational programs offered by FCHS: You Got to Move It...Strategies for Fit Families, Smooth Moves for Choosing Healthy Beverages, Keeping Me Germ Free, and Snack Attack, The Healthy Way. These nutritional sessions offered a discussion and demonstration on how beverages and snacks can be healthy. Participants tasted smoothies made with low-fat dairy and healthy fruit choices, as well as made their own healthy snacks by utilizing fruits and vegetables from the various color groups.

The food safety session offered a discussion on the importance of hand-washing, germs and cross-contamination onto food, with an interactive hand-washing demonstration and hand-sanitizer samples. The physical activity session reviewed the significance of movement as part of a healthy lifestyle. Participants demonstrated their ability for jumping rope and other activity that can be easily incorporated in a daily routine. The FCHS involvement in this project evaluated student and parent development toward increasing amounts of physical activity, as well as assessed their knowledge on nutrition and food safety.

Community Partners

- Bolger Middle School
- Easter Seals

Cooperative Extension Partners

- Family and Community Health Sciences
- Master Gardener Program
- 4H Youth Development
- Agricultural Resource Management

Participants

- Grades 5-8, after school program participants
- Parents, teachers, and students
- Number of children=50
- Number of parents=8
- Number of teachers/staff=7

Program Goals

- Increase family meals
- Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy
- Control portion sizes
- Decrease consumption of beverages containing large amounts of sugar
- Increase physical activity



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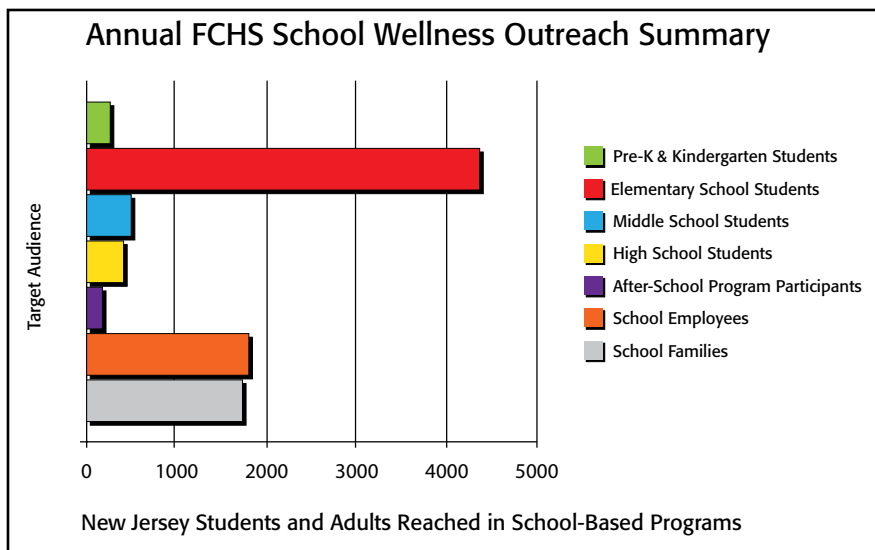
Educational Sessions

1. You Got to Move It...Strategies for Fit Families (Physical Activity)
2. Smooth Moves for Choosing Healthy Beverages (Making Healthy Beverage Choices)
3. Keeping Me Germ Free (Food Safety & Handwashing)
4. Snack Attack, The Healthy Way (Making Healthy Snack Choices)

Results

- 100% of participants (n=58) identified a change they would make to reduce their current unhealthy selections for beverages to be replaced with a healthier choice.
- 95% of participants would try to recreate making fruit smoothies at home as a more nutritional option for beverages.

- 100% of children (n=50) would try at least one of the alternative choices for healthier beverages and would be involved with shopping with parents for ingredients.
- 100% of participants identified at least one new physical activity they would commit to trying.
- 70% of students were familiar with pedometers and 50% had previously used pedometers.
- 100% of parents (n=8) would engage in physical activities daily as a family.
- 100% of participants would make changes in food preparation to prevent the spread of germs
- Six students tried a new vegetable and enjoyed it.



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