The Awards for Excellence in Texas School Health program recognizes and promotes effective school health programs and initiatives that strive to improve the lifelong health of students, staff and the greater school community.

Texas Department of State Health Services - School Health Program
www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth
Awards Ceremony
January 30, 2009
Austin Airport Hilton Hotel

Presentation Of 2008 Awards

Opening Remarks
Adolfo Valadez, M.D., M.P.H.

Presentation of Texas Health Institute Awards
Camille Miller, President and CEO, Texas Health Institute

Excellence Awards
“Practically On My Own”
Ronny Crownover Middle School

“CATCH – Coordinated Approach to Children’s Health”
Meyer Elementary School

“First Aid Fridays”
Pflugerville Middle School

Outstanding Award
“Super Stars Fitness Program”
Spring Valley Elementary School

Vanguard Awards
“BEST Boot Camp”
Haude Elementary School

“Mission Possible: Uniting for Health”
Little Cypress-Mauriceville Consolidated Independent School District

Presentation of Texas Pediatric Society Foundation Awards
Linda Roulier-Rogers, Chairman of the Board, Texas Pediatric Society Foundation

Awards of Achievement
“G. W. Carver Academy Health and Wellness Committee”
G. W. Carver Academy Middle School

“CATCH – Coordinated Approach to Children’s Health”
Meyer Elementary School

“Hike & Bike”
Silver Lake Elementary School
This program was developed out of a concern for the growing epidemic of obesity among school age children. A survey conducted among the school population found that many students had diabetes and made poor food choices when not in school. These health issues could affect student’s emotional and social health as well. The desire for a healthy student population prompted the development of the Health and Wellness Committee which is made up of health professionals, community members, students, parents and teachers. The committee develops and implements wellness policies and programs that promote better health practices, nutrition, healthy eating habits and exercise for staff, students and parents.

Projects directed to the physical, mental and social-emotional health needs of all concerned were developed.  
- A quarterly newsletter was created and is disseminated to parents, students and staff members. It contains articles on diet, fitness and prevention of the spread of diseases such as staph and MRSA.
- Collaboration with community partners led to presentations (targeting health issues) that were provided to the entire student body.
- Dental issues were addressed through access to low or no-cost services.
- Health fairs targeting the total person were conducted,
- A “punch-card” walking program was initiated and a
- Staff wellness program remains successful today.

All activities are evaluated and improvement is continual. The success of the program is directly related to the ongoing support and enthusiasm of the Health and Wellness Committee.

**Ronny Crownover Middle School – “Practically On My Own”**

**Jonita Widmer, R.N.,** School Nurse – Program Contact  
**Dianne Blair,** Principal  
**Ray Braswell,** Superintendent, Denton I.S.D.  
ESC Region 11

This program was designed to meet basic health instruction needs and provide students with the knowledge and skills to be safe while at home alone. The program was developed for students in Crownover’s social adjustment class (a self-contained special education classroom for students with emotional or behavioral issues). Classroom teachers provide science and health instruction according to the TEKS guidelines but this program was designed to specifically meet the needs of these students. Instruction included:

- Body systems, health, basic first aid and CPR, personal hygiene, nutrition and social norms,  
- CPR training that included how and when to call 911, and  
- How to care for pets including a visit by a local veterinarian.

Collaboration with additional community partners brought added dimension and “real-life” situations to the program. Weekly lessons were taught or coordinated by the school nurse and consisted of lectures, role playing, videos, interactive games, workbooks and classroom instruction. The program was evaluated through student pre and post-tests and was offered as a “best practice” seminar for other secondary nurses in the district.

**G. W. Carver Academy Middle School —  “G. W. Carver Academy Health and Wellness Committee”**

**Brenda Renfro-King, R.N.,** – Program Contact  
**Pamela Correa,** Principal  
**Dr. Roland Hernandez,** Superintendent, Waco I.S.D.  
ESC Region 12

This program was developed out of a concern for the growing epidemic of obesity among school age children. A survey conducted among the school population found that many students had diabetes and made poor food choices when not in school. These health issues could affect student’s emotional and social health as well. The desire for a healthy student population prompted the development of the Health and Wellness Committee which is made up of health professionals, community members, students, parents and teachers. The committee develops and implements wellness policies and programs that promote better health practices, nutrition, healthy eating habits and exercise for staff, students and parents.

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- Staff wellness program remains successful today.

All activities are evaluated and improvement is continual. The success of the program is directly related to the ongoing support and enthusiasm of the Health and Wellness Committee.

“**This is their health. This is their life. We are trying to teach them to make the most of it.**”  
– Pamela Correa

“**We don’t have the opportunity to change a situation when a child is left alone at home; but, we can provide them with skills to deal with situations more safely and responsibly.**”  
– Dianne Blair
The school nurse conducted a risk factor assessment with the students at Meyer Elementary and the assessment found that:

- 25% of the children were at risk for developing diabetes,
- 69% of those children were overweight,
- 40% already had high blood pressure and because
- 81% of overweight children become obese adults, it was important to include the staff.

Up until this past year, the district did not have a mandated health curriculum in place for elementary school-aged children. In order to provide a coordinated approach to school health, Spring I.S.D. implemented the CATCH program with its main objective to get everyone in the school and the community involved in teaching children about a healthy lifestyle. This involved coordinating the efforts of teachers, students, parents, child nutritionists, nurses, counselors, administrators, community members and outside organizations in monthly CATCH meetings. Activities that were implemented included:

- Facilitating CATCH training workshops for school staff,
- Creating a Staff Wellness Bulletin Board,
- Creating after-school programs and a physical fitness assessment for students in grades 3-5,
- Devising contest incentives – poster contests to win new bikes, a wellness week, a food label wall, CATCH bingo, and
- Sponsoring a student/parent mile run, a health fair, and a school Olympics.

The district SHAC and many community partners helped to make the program a success. Spring I.S.D. was awarded "Outstanding District" in the 2007-2008 school year. Eighty-one percent of the Meyer Elementary staff accepted the program and implemented it into their classrooms. Teachers were given equipment and materials to provide incentives for children and to incorporate CATCH skills into their daily lessons.

Susan Bayliss, R.N., M.S.N., Director of Health Services – Program Contact
Dr. Pauline Hargrove, Superintendent  
ESC Region 5

Due to an increase in overall student weights and chronic illness in both students and staff, Little Cypress-Mauriceville C.I.S.D. (LCMCISD) campus nurses identified specific health needs for both students and employees. The Mission Possible: Uniting for Health goal is to encourage better overall health habits such as good nutrition, increased exercise and maintenance of good general physical health among students and district employees at the primary and secondary levels. This program is an expansion of last year’s LCMCISD Awards for Excellence winning program. This year, the goal was broadened to include students and employees on all six LCMCISD campuses, community organizations, the local community college, and five other school districts in southeast Texas.

Ideas were shared between the institutions and the county extension office. Activities included:
- Fruit and Veggie Tasting Parties, and Walk Your Child to School Day,
- Classroom education tip sheets, a district Web page, family health screenings, summer cooking classes, and
- Planning summer meetings to help grow the Uniting for Health program.

Exercise efforts increased and overall safety habits improved. A change in eating habits and exercise enjoyment in elementary students has been notable. Measurements of weight and BMI will be recorded over the next two years to assess student progress.

Pflugerville Middle School – “First Aid Fridays”

Wendy Mackey, R.N., N.C.S.N., School Nurse – Program Contact
Mary Kimmins, Principal
Charles Dupre, Superintendent, Pflugerville I.S.D.  
ESC Region 13

First Aid Fridays is a health program presented every week through the morning video announcements to students at Pflugerville Middle School. Students enrolled in the video technology class have played actors, filmed, and edited 19 video presentations scripted by the school nurse. Concern over the increased numbers of students visiting the nurse’s office on Monday morning seeking treatment for injuries occurring over the weekend prompted the idea for the program. When students expressed the fact that they didn’t know what to do when these injuries occurred, it became quite apparent that students needed some basic first aid education. Topics for the series were selected from the student’s most common first aid complaints and those where treatment was delayed or inappropriately treated.

Video presentations have included:
- “Sprains, Strains and Injuries Requiring Ice”  
- “More on Sports Injuries”  
- “Cuts, Scratches and Scrapes”  
- “Nosebleeds”  
- “Medication Safety”  
- “MRSA”  
- “Asthma”

The program expanded in the 2007-2008 school year to include more first aid topics such as stomachaches, headaches, sore throats, hygiene, rashes, pink eye, burns and puncture wounds. As a result of the program, students are more aware of basic first aid, recognize the information in real-life situations, and have begun to verbalize not just their symptoms, but often suggesting their treatment.
The program encourages family participation and reinforces an all-over lifestyle rather than just school activities.” – Dianne Gorrie

Dianne Gorrie, R.N.C., B.S.N., School Nurse – Program Contact
Lisa Dunn, Principal
Dr. Kay Waggoner, Superintendent, Grapevine-Colleyville I.S.D. ESC Region 11

Silver Lake Elementary School – “Hike & Bike”

The Hike & Bike program was created as a response to the current obesity epidemic in school age children as well as the increased incidence of diabetes and other related health problems. Silver Lake Elementary, located in the suburb of Grapevine, has a population with the following health issues: 11.4% of it’s residents have been diagnosed with diabetes and 32.7% have been diagnosed with elevated blood pressure.

In 2007, only 1.7% of the population walked or biked to work. A one-day school survey showed that out of 500 students, 38 students walked to school, 15 rode bicycles, 2 rode scooters, 54 children were bused to school and 260 cars transported children to school even though 82% of the Silver Lake students live within walking or biking distance to school. Studies show that if students are physically active and healthy they perform better academically, are better educated and health conscious.

The Hike & Bike program’s objectives included:
1. Encourage students, families and staff to be more physically active by participating in after school organized sports and hiking and biking to school on a regular basis.
2. Integrate the physical activity program with academics so students would be stimulated academically while participating in physical activity.

The activities implemented included:
• Bicycle safety clinics, a stunt bike team school assembly, and Hike or Bike to School Day,
• Incorporating geography and math skills by providing student incentives to track miles or minutes of daily biking or hiking,
• Bicycle give-a-ways, year-end parties, incentive field trips, student recognition, and
• Daily motivational announcements.

Program participation increased from its first year in 2006, to the following levels:
• Monthly Hike & Bike activity participants went from 100 to 150.
• Miles traveled (by the end of the school year) increased from 3,396 to 6,536.
• Overall participation increased with students up from 200 to 247 and staff members up from 6 to 18.

Because of its successes and community partnerships, Silver Lake Elementary School was awarded $88,713 in construction funds for sidewalks, pedestrian signals and flashing school zone signs by the Texas Transportation Commission’s Safe Routes to School Program.
Spring Valley Elementary School – “Super Stars Fitness Program”

Sherry Freeland, R.N., B.S.N., School Nurse – Program Contact
Keith Forte, Principal
David Simmons, Superintendent, Richardson I.S.D.  ESC Region 1

Elementary school nurses are required to screen all 1st, 3rd and 5th grade students for Acanthosis Nigricans (AN). This skin marker on the back of the neck can indicate a child’s predisposition to developing Type 2 Diabetes. The Super Stars Fitness Program now in its fourth year was developed as a proactive way of educating students and their parents about Type 2 Diabetes and how a healthy lifestyle can help prevent this disease. The program specifically targets the children and families of children with the AN marker. When a student was found to have the marker, their height, weight, BMI and two blood pressures were checked by the school nurse. A referral letter would be sent home asking the parents to have the child evaluated by a doctor.

Parents and students identified with the AN marker were invited to attend the Super Stars Fitness Program which included:
- Education regarding diabetes and its prevention,
- Instruction about healthy food choices and exercise provided by a dietician and the school physical education teacher,
- Games and dance demonstrating that exercise can be fun, and
- The preparation and sampling of healthy snacks.

At the end of the school year, the children took home a specially prepared “Super Stars Fitness Folder” and were encouraged to track their daily exercise throughout the summer. Parents would sign the exercise tracking forms to validate them. Sports safety tips were also included in the take home packet. At the end of the summer, those who had exercised successfully were invited to a celebration party. This school year, 96% of the students returned their folder and participated in the exercise program.

“This program is successful because it focuses on the parent-child team practicing successful diet and exercise strategies together.”  
– Sherry Freeland

For more information about the Awards for Excellence program or, if you would like to contact any of the program coordinators identified in this publication about their award winning program, email Ellen Smith at ellen.smith@dshs.state.tx.us or call 512-458-7111, Ext. 2140.
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Deadline for Applications
October 2, 2009

Winners Notified
October 16, 2009

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January 29, 2010

To find out more, go to www.dhs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/awards.shtm