

## On the Move to Better Health

### The situation

According to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the prevalence of obesity among children aged 6 to 11 more than doubled in the past 20 years, going from 6.5% in 1980 to 17.0% in 2006.

Many young people in the United States make poor food choices that may put them at risk for health problems. Establishing healthy eating habits at a young age is critical because changing poor eating patterns in adulthood is difficult.

The increased prevalence of overweight, obesity and the risk for associated chronic diseases has been estimated to increase health care costs by \$200 million a year in North Dakota.

### Extension response

"On the Move to Better Health" is a series of five lessons shared with fifth graders and their parents. Lessons include information on the My Pyramid, the importance of calcium, physical activity, fruits and vegetables and healthy snack selections. Youth set personal health goals and log personal behaviors supportive of good health over a five week period. Each week a family newsletter, coinciding with the lesson, is shared with parents. Student and parent pre and post surveys were conducted.

### Impacts

During the 2008-2009 school year the program was conducted with fifth graders of Mount Pleasant, Rolette, St. John, Dunseith Public and Turtle Mountain Community Elementary Schools. A total of 149 students were reached.

On post-surveys, 36% of student indicated they reduced the amount of time spent watching TV and playing computer/video games.

Student activity increased with 66% of the fifth graders reporting their activity level had increased during the five weeks. The mean number of days being active was 5.1 days per week.

At the conclusion of the program 53% reported drinking less soda pop and 57% indicated they drink more water.

The post survey indicated 35.6% of the participants were reading snack food labels and 31.5% noted they choose healthier snacks.

Parent post surveys showed parents became more knowledgeable of their child's dietary needs as it related to milk/dairy foods, fruits and vegetables. Many parents over estimated the amount of fruits, vegetables and dairy foods their child needed in the pre survey.

### Feedback

"She asked if we can move more-daily in some way. She would like a membership at the local fitness center for our family" – parent

"Learning now, things about size of servings" – parent

"I liked the "On the Move" program because I eat healthier with it. Thank you" - student

"It was good working more with my mom" - student

### Contact

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