

## Phoenix Elementary School Fourth Graders are “Banking on Strong Bones”

### The Situation

Calcium is the nutrient most likely lacking in the American diet. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 70 percent of preteen girls and 60 percent of preteen boys do not meet daily calcium recommendations. According to nutrition experts, this calcium shortage places the current generation at greater risk for osteoporosis, a condition known as “pediatric disease with geriatric consequences.”

### Extension Response

*Banking on Strong Bones* addresses the “calcium crisis” among youth and reaches fourth-graders with an NDSU-developed, pilot-tested curriculum delivered in elementary classrooms across North Dakota. Based on My Plate recommendations, the multi-week effort includes classroom nutrition lessons with participation incentives, educational materials and hands-on activities. Families receive newsletters designed to improve knowledge of nutrition and physical activity.

### Impacts

In February 2012, two classes of fourth graders at Phoenix Elementary School participated in the four week curriculum, *Banking on Strong Bones*. Students improved their knowledge scores and made nutrition and physical activity changes to improve their health.

- On the post-survey, 89 percent indicated they drink milk every day.
- On the post-survey, 73 percent of students indicated they would choose milk instead of soda pop.

- 100 percent of the students indicated on the post-survey that they knew calcium is needed to build strong bones and teeth.

### Feedback

Parents reported:

- I have noticed a positive change in my child’s eating habits, as he is a lot more aware of what his body needs.
- My daughter is giving more attention to getting her calcium/dairy servings in each day and is more willing to try different foods.
- My son has asked to eat dairy products because he’s keeping track of daily intake. He is also making snack choices which involve dairy, yogurt, milk and cheese.

Teachers reported they liked the My Plate updates and that students were bringing healthier snacks to school.

Students reported they liked the interactive activity used to teach them about label reading.

### Contact

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