On the Move to Better Health - Rolette County

The Situation
Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. Some researchers consider children to be “overfed” but “undernourished.” Obese children are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease, with 70 percent showing at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Obesity also increases the risk for diabetes, stroke, cancer and osteoarthritis.

Extension Response
On the Move to Better Health is a five-week school-based curriculum for fifth-graders. It is based on MyPlate, the current icon for good nutrition. The curriculum aims to increase fruits, vegetables and calcium-rich foods in the diets of children and improve fitness habits. Parents receive newsletters and participate in goal setting and other family-based activities.

Impacts
From 2007 to 2016, a total of 19,172 children and their families participated in On the Move to Better Health across the state. Post-surveys with 2,910 children in 2015-16 showed the following as a result of the program:

- 50% consumed more dairy
- 55% drank less pop
- 52% chose healthier snacks
- 57% increased daily physical activity
- 50% ate more fruits and vegetable

Feedback
Children said:
- “I liked how it made my family and me more healthy”
- “I learned to make healthier choices and be more active and how important that is”

Public Value Statement
Improving health behaviors can increase quality of life and save millions of dollars in collective healthcare costs for North Dakotans throughout their lifetime.

County Impact
In Rolette County, 12.9% of adults are diagnosed with diabetes and 41.4% are obese (County Health Rankings, 2016). These rates are higher than overall North Dakota and the general US population rates, and increasing.

This program helps youth set personal health goals and develop health patterns that will help them grow up healthier and reduce their risk of chronic diseases of today’s adult population. This program reached 286 fifth grade youth throughout the county in 2016. Participants set personal health goals at the beginning of the program, with 75.9% meeting their set goals.

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