On the Move Junior Program
Improves Nutritional Intake Among Children, 2017-18

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

The Situation
More than 30 percent of North Dakota children 2 to 5 years old are considered overweight or obese (with a body mass index for their age above the 85th percentile). According to the Youth Behavior Risk Surveillance Survey (2015), 42 percent of North Dakota students in grades nine to 12 consumed vegetables less than one time daily, 75 percent of adolescents were not physically active at least 60 minutes per day, and about 12 percent were not physically active 60 minutes on at least one day during the seven days prior to the survey.

Extension Response
"On the Move Junior" is a five-week school-based curriculum for second-graders. It is based on MyPlate, the current icon for nutrition, and includes children’s storybooks and hands-on activities. The curriculum aims to improve the variety of healthful foods, especially fruits and vegetables, that children consume. It also aims to improve fitness habits. Parents receive newsletters and participate in goal setting and other family-based activities.

Impacts
Since 2014, 6,947 children have participated. In 2016-17, 1,828 students in 25 counties completed the program.

Participants improved their knowledge of nutritional recommendations as shown by test scores:
- 85 percent ate more fruit
- 75 percent ate more vegetables
- 83 percent tried a new food
- 76 percent tried different colored fruit
- 87 percent engaged in more exercise

According to survey results, 78 percent of parents read the weekly newsletter. Parents reported that their children asked questions about food (58 percent), offered help with food preparation (40 percent), requested healthful snacks (47 percent) and tried a new food (42 percent).

Feedback
Parents said:
- “She was concerned we weren’t eating enough vegetables. So she makes sure every meal we have one now.”
- “He really enjoyed trying new foods.”

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[Map of implementing counties]