ND Children are On the Move to Stronger Bodies 2017-2018

The Situation
Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. 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 Stronger Bodies is a six-week school-based curriculum for fourth-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 through hands-on activities.

Impacts
From 2017 to 18, more than 1,300 children and their families from 21 counties participated in On the Move to Stronger Bodies. Post-surveys showed the following as a result of the program:

- 75 percent consumed more dairy/calcium-rich foods
- 73 percent drank less pop
- 77 percent chose more healthful snacks
- 80 percent increased daily physical activity
- 70 percent ate more vegetables

Parents received a weekly newsletter with activities to try at home; 73 percent of survey respondents reported reading it and 36 percent set family goals. In making observations of their child’s behavior at home, surveys with 329 parents/caregivers showed the following responses:

- 37 percent of children increased their vegetable consumption.
- 50 percent drank less soda
- 45 percent asked questions about food and 55 percent talked about the activities done in class.

Feedback
Children said:

- "It is very awesome and helpful to learn about eating healthy."
- "This class is very fun and you do amazing activities."

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.

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