

Henderson County receives Eat Smart Move More NC grant to help youth move more

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(Hendersonville, NC) - The Henderson County Department of Public Health has received an *Eat Smart, Move More NC* Community Grant for 2010-2012 to fund local physical activity projects targeting youth ages 9 to 14.

The Henderson County Dana and Upward Elementary Schools Project will give students more choices to get active through expanded physical education classes and running groups. Fitness and yoga classes will be offered to staff at each school. Working with local Boy Scout troops, the Dana Elementary School walking trail will be refurbished to help students move more and provide a multi-use trail for local residents in the Dana community. In addition, new policies at each school will increase physical education time and look at ways to reward students using non-food rewards.

“We are looking forward to working with two county schools that are really leading the way in health and fitness initiatives. Both Dana and Upward Elementary Schools have strong leadership and a proven record of accomplishment in implementing new and creative ways to improve the physical and nutritional health of their students,” stated Linda Charping, health education director at the Department of Public Health. “The school principals are enthusiastic and supportive of implementing new health policies and are dedicated to the well-being of their students.”

For the first time, the *Eat Smart, Move More NC* community grants are being awarded for a two-year cycle to study the impact the grants are having in the communities that receive them. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded funding in the fall of 2009 to the N.C. Division of Public Health’s Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch to work with East Carolina University’s Department of Public Health in evaluating the program. Henderson County will receive funding for data collection in 2010-2012 and for program implementation in 2011-2012.

North Carolina ranks 10th in the nation in overweight and obese adolescents. The percentage of children and adults who are overweight or obese rises each year and despite advances in

medicine, the current generation of children may be the first to live shorter lives than their parents. *Eat Smart, Move More NC* strives to reverse this trend by making the healthy choice the easy choice.

The N.C. Division of Public Health funded 20 county/district health departments for the two-year grant cycle. The *Eat Smart, Move More NC* Community Grants support the *Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina* movement and *Eat Smart, Move More: North Carolina's Plan to Prevent Overweight, Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases*, the state's obesity prevention plan. This plan emphasizes strategies that make healthier eating and increased physical activity easier to achieve by, for example, adding walking paths in neighborhoods or around schools, or changing what foods a school can serve both at lunch and for after-school snacks.

“Making our schools and after school programs, our neighborhoods and our places of worship supportive of healthy eating and active lifestyles is important so that kids learn these habits early and carry them into adulthood,” said State Health Director Dr. Jeff Engel. “It also means each generation of kids gain the benefit of these more sustainable changes to our communities.”

All the funded projects are described on the *Eat Smart, Move More NC* Web site at www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com. *Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina* is a statewide movement that promotes increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity wherever people live, learn, earn, play and pray. The movement is led by a coalition of more than 60 organizations. For more information on the *Eat Smart, Move More NC* movement or to find out how your community can promote healthful eating and physical activity, visit www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com on the Web.

For more information on Henderson County's project, contact Linda Charping at 694-6063 or charping@hendersoncountync.org.

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