Project Healthy Schools Goals

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Choose less sugary food and beverages
- Eat less fast and fatty food
- Be active every day
- Spend less time in front of a screen

Did you know?

- Faatimah Raisa, a U-M student, received the Davis Foundation’s Projects for Peace Award for taking PHS to Bangladesh (see Fall 2017 PHS Newsletter)
- Munger Middle School students will participate in the Detroit Tigers Ninth Annual “Kids Opening Day” as guests of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan on Sunday, May 27 at Comerica Park. Munger was selected because of their success in creating a healthy school environment through the Building Healthy Communities program.
- The videos from last fall’s Wellness Champion Gathering are available for viewing on YouTube at goo.gl/AfkjBu

Michigan Health Endowment Fund awards second year of funding for Healthy Kids U.P.

The Michigan Health Endowment Fund recently awarded Project Healthy Schools (PHS) and the Healthy Kids U.P. (HKUP) project a second year of funding. HKUP is a collaborative partnership between PHS, six health departments in the Upper Peninsula, and Michigan State University Extension. Together, their mission is to positively change the culture of health among middle schools and youth across the Upper Peninsula.

Through the HKUP project, PHS added six new U.P. schools during the 2017-2018 school year. These six schools are spread across the entire Upper Peninsula, with one school located within each of the six health department jurisdictions. After successfully implementing the first year of the project, HKUP

13 BHC:PHS schools win School Wellness Awards

Thirteen schools in the Building Healthy Communities: Engaging Middle Schools through Project Healthy Schools (BHC:PHS) program won Michigan School Wellness Awards in 2018. The awards are sponsored by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Education, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Action for Healthy Kids. The award ceremony was held on May 10 in the rotunda of the Capitol building. A total of 46 schools won awards. The 13 winning BHC:PHS schools include:

Gold Award Winners
- Allendale Middle School, Allendale
- Bentley Middle School, Burton
- MacDonald Middle School, East Lansing

Silver Award Winners
- Boyne City Middle School, Boyne City
- Cherryland Middle School, Elk Rapids
- E.B. Holman Elementary School, Atlantic Mine
- East Middle School, Plymouth
- Negaunee Middle School, Negaunee
- Portland Middle School, Portland
- Vista Charter Academy, Grand Rapids
- White Pine Middle School, Saginaw

Bronze Award Winners
- Milan Middle School, Milan
- St. Mary Catholic School, Pinckney

Congratulations to the above schools, their wellness champions and wellness teams for providing a shining example of what it takes to build healthy school environments.
Healthy kids need healthy role models. Since kids tend to mimic what they see at home and school, Project Healthy Schools partnered with Weight Watchers to unveil a special offer that encourages and supports healthy living among Michigan educators and school employees.

When students see staff practicing what they preach, they are more likely to practice those same healthy behaviors, says Florine Mark, President and CEO of The Weight Watchers Group, Inc.

The offer, announced in an Ask Florine segment shown on WDIV during the 6 p.m. news on March 19, lets employees at schools currently participating in the Project Healthy Schools program join Weight Watchers at a discounted rate. The schools must be located within The Weight Watchers Group, Inc.’s franchise area to qualify for the discount. For details about the special offer, visit: https://888-3-florine.com/project-healthy-schools/

“Because we know the importance of positive role models in students’ lives, we partnered with Weight Watchers to offer an enrichment opportunity to interested school staff members who want help achieving a healthier weight and practicing healthy lifestyle behaviors,” says Jean DuRussel-Weston, program manager for Project Healthy Schools.

Florine Mark is on the PHS Advisory Board. Project Healthy Schools is grateful to Florine Mark and the Weight Watchers Group Inc.’s marketing team for their efforts in raising awareness about Project Healthy Schools, including this interview that ran on ClickonDetroit’s Live in the D on April 5.
Cardiovascular risk factors associated with high blood pressure in students

By Rachel Krallman

Many studies have explored the connection between high blood pressure and other cardiovascular risk factors in adults. PHS investigators wanted to see if the same relationship existed in children participating in PHS. Students were divided into two groups based on their blood pressure, taken before the PHS program began. Students with a systolic blood pressure above 120mmHg were placed into the “high blood pressure group,” and physiological measurements were compared between students with and without high blood pressure. Students with high blood pressure were found to have higher total cholesterol, triglycerides, BMI, resting and recovery heart rates, and lower HDL cholesterol (the good cholesterol) than students without high blood pressure. These results suggest that high blood pressure could be a predictor for other cardiovascular risk factors in children. High blood pressure in childhood often results in high blood pressure in adulthood. School-based health interventions, like PHS, may be a useful tool in curbing this trend.

PHS collaborates with U-M Depression Center around mental health

Since 2009, the University of Michigan Depression Center’s Peer-to-Peer Program (P2P) has been helping high school students throughout Washtenaw County create depression awareness campaigns in school that raise awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking around mental health. This year, PHS is supporting the Depression Center to bring P2P to several PHS sites, including all five Ann Arbor middle schools, as well as Lincoln Middle School, Washtenaw International Middle Academy and Ypsilanti Community Middle School.

“We are excited to bring this program to middle schools and have the support of the PHS team. It is amazing to see how much students want to help their peers.” said Lizelle Salazar, Coordinator for Outreach and Education, at the U-M Depression Center.

The first signs of depression and bipolar illness often appear between the ages of 15 and 24, with 20% of teens experiencing depression before they reach adulthood. Middle school age may be when some students first experience depression-related symptoms, so it’s important that students are able to recognize it and feel comfortable seeking help early. PHS had already identified a need for social and emotional health support among middle school students when the U-M Depression Center reached out for advice in starting P2P in Ann Arbor area middle schools this fall.

The P2P program relies on two key components: 1) meeting with youth in their school, and 2) utilizing the help of those they trust most – their peers. At each school a team of five or more students attend an educational conference at the UM Depression Center on depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and strategies to develop an effective depression awareness campaign. Then, under the supervision of a school counselor or other adult mentor, the students design unique outreach activities for their schools that may include: presentations, classroom lesson plans, bulletin boards, information tables, videos, handouts, announcements, and/or social media.

PHS consulted with Depression Center staff on how to adapt the high school program to a middle school audience and provided introductions to staff and principals in PHS schools. Staff from the U-M Depression Center are providing teachers at these PHS schools with professional development training around suicide prevention, and are collaborating with PHS to better support the health and well-being of students and staff.
Healthy Kids U.P. continued from page one

received a second year of funding. This funding will expand the PHS program to six more new schools across the Upper Peninsula during the 2018-2019 academic school year, as well as provide funding for the six returning schools. With the addition of these HKUP schools, PHS will now be implemented in 17 schools in the Upper Peninsula.

Health and wellness resources are greatly welcomed within the Upper Peninsula. Specific barriers directly impact the healthy choices available to youth across the Upper Peninsula, such as an unequal distribution of farmers, a shorter growing season, lower levels of physical activity during winter months, increased access to convenient and fast food, and the prevalence of food deserts.

“There is a lack of variety of fruits and vegetables at most U.P. grocery stores and not many fitness facilities in our towns” said Betsy Babione, Health Educator with the LMAS District Health Department. “Unless schools have sports or extra-curricular programs, not much else exists throughout the community for our kids,” continues Babione.

In addition to schools implementing all components of the PHS program, with support from local health department health educators, the HKUP project also seeks to connect participating schools to a larger network of community resources.

“The asset mapping started as an idea to stop the duplication of efforts from each health agency and dissipate the competition for health programming in schools across the Upper Peninsula. Surveys were developed and distributed to all schools across the U.P. to gather data to place on an asset map for all schools and agencies to access,” explains Erin Carter, Extension Educator with MSU-Extension.

“No matter where you are in the U.P., everyone benefits from the asset mapping project. When you live and play in many small rural communities across the Upper Peninsula, with the asset mapping tool, we all win because we all benefit from having something at our fingertips to pull tools and resources from. What a great opportunity and resource tool for our U.P.-wide schools”, says Kelly Rumpf, Health Educator with the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department.

Building local partnerships, like with the HKUP project, gives PHS the ability to leverage community resources to support schools with program implementation, behavior and culture change, as well as sustainability.

“The opportunity to draw on resources and build partnerships amongst a vast geographic area and demographic of schools across the Upper Peninsula has been extremely rewarding for everyone involved in the HKUP project and I’m very excited that our impact will expand even further during our second year,” said Brad Newman, PHS wellness and grants coordinator.

Rep. Noble promotes PHS program in Plymouth

State Rep. Jeff Noble visited East Middle School in Plymouth to learn more about Project Healthy Schools on Monday, April 16, 2018.

“We had a great conversation about the PHS program and discussed other opportunities for education reform within our Michigan schools,” said Ben Ransier, curriculum and training coordinator for PHS.

“This program is an excellent tool for students and teachers to learn about healthy habits inside and outside the classroom,” Rep. Noble said. “Visiting East Middle School was a great experience. I look forward to sharing the information I learned about Project Healthy Schools with my colleagues in Lansing.”

Rep. Noble met with Elizabeth Mosher, director of education for Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, Christopher Marek, assistant principal of East Middle School, Scott Burek, principal of East Middle School, Ben Ransier, curriculum and training coordinator for PHS, and several other school staff members.

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We are also grateful to the many other corporations, foundations and individual donors who have supported PHS over the years.

Information on how to donate is available at www.projecthealthyschools.org

or by contacting Ryann Eff at 734-998-6044


The Project Healthy Schools newsletter is distributed three times per year.