**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?**

- The 2019 Wellness Champion Gathering will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on November 11th at the Michigan League in Ann Arbor. All wellness champions, administrators, teachers and wellness team members from PHS schools are invited.

- PHS was mentioned in an article on page 28 of Findings, a semi-annual publication of the U-M School of Public Health.

- You can support PHS in fighting childhood obesity by following us on social media, liking our posts, sharing them with friends and commenting on our content. We regularly post on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Help us improve the health of Michigan's youth.

**18 schools win school wellness awards**

Out of 46 schools that received 2019 Michigan School Wellness Awards, 18 of the schools (or 39%) are using the Project Healthy Schools (PHS) program. Most of these schools started PHS as part of the Building Healthy Communities partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The Michigan School Wellness Award program is a collaboration between the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the United Dairy Industry of Michigan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Michigan Action for Healthy Kids and the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition.

The program encourages schools statewide to create healthy school environments by establishing school wellness teams, completing the Healthy School Action Tools.

See “School wellness awards” on back page

**PHS receives President’s Staff Award of Distinction**

Distinction for teaching thousands of middle school students how to live healthy lives. The award specifically honors one individual and one team from across the university whose accomplishments displayed innovation.

Kim Eagle, M.D., director of the U-M Frankel Cardiovascular Center and Project Healthy Schools co-founder said, “Congratulations to our team on receiving the University’s highest form of staff recognition!!”

Find out how you can support Project Healthy Schools’ award winning work at [https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#/give/basket/fund/308462](https://leadersandbest.umich.edu/find/#/give/basket/fund/308462) or call Ryann Eff at 734-998-6044.

On May 13, 2019, President Schlissel recognized Project Healthy Schools as the team winner of the University of Michigan’s 2019 President’s Staff Award of Distinction. From left are Nathan Sault-er, Jean DuRussel-Weston, Ben Ransier, Jana Stewart, President Mark Schlissel, Miriam Dineen, Jacob Robidou, Jennifer Alexander, Brad Newman and Julie Nelson.
PHS Sugar Shock lesson helps Ferndale student lose weight

Anthony Warkoczeski, a physical education teacher at Ferndale Middle School said, “I had a student named Ryan who was obese, and with [the Project Healthy Schools] lessons he didn't seem that engaged through the first couple lessons.

“I went to Ryan and asked him why he wasn't engaged in the lessons. He said he was embarrassed to talk about food. He was teased, he told me, about his weight.

“He said, ‘Mr. Warko, I am listening to what you have to say, because I need to lose some of this weight. I wanted to run with my classmates but I can't right now. I am going to have more fruits and vegetables and less juice. I thought juice was healthy... I didn't know juice had that much sugar. I am going to just have water every day. I need to have more water.’

“Ryan lost 15 pounds in 10 weeks. He was so happy to see just a little change can make a change,” said Mr. Warkoczeski.

St. Mary’s Bunny Run raises money for school wellness initiatives

On April 13, families of Saint Mary Catholic School students participated in the 3rd Annual Family Fun Bunny Run on the Lakeland Trail in Pinckney. Approximately 40 runners from preschool age to great grandmothers took part in the fun run/walk, choosing to complete either a one- or two-mile course. The annual event raises money for school wellness initiatives.

“We had great weather and lots of excited kids!” said St. Mary’s teacher and Wellness Champion Paula Dzombak.

All runners received a healthy snack, a finishers "medal" and an entry in the prize raffle. Bunny runners also used refillable water bottles to help maintain the school’s Evergreen status as a State of Michigan Certified Green School.

As quoted in the Sun Times News, principal Veronica Kinsey said, “St. Mary families look forward to the Bunny Run because so many join, from little ones in strollers, to students, parents, grandparents and even great grandmas who walk the trail while the crowd cheers them on. Many of our St. Mary families are multi-generational, so the Bunny Run is a great way to bring everyone together to celebrate Easter and spring.”

Parent Laura Elgas of Dexter told the Sun Times News reporter, “My favorite memories from the Bunny Run are of the kids cheering each other on. The kids really support each other. They cheer for each and every runner, the older kids circle back to help the younger students finish the run. It’s a special tradition for our St. Mary family.”

Another parent who has participated in all three Bunny Runs said, "We’ll be back next year, even though our son is graduating from the school this year.”
PHS compares impact on urban and rural youth

By Rachel Krallman

Rural areas in the United States have a higher prevalence of adolescent obesity than urban areas. A recent Project Healthy Schools study compared the physiological measurements and health behaviors of urban and rural students participating in PHS between 2004-2017. Based on U.S. 2012 Census data, students were classified as “urban” if their school’s location had a population ≥50,000 people, or “rural” if their school’s location had a population <50,000 people. Physiological measures and health behaviors were compared between groups pre- and post-PHS intervention.

Pre-PHS intervention, urban students had better resting and recovery heart rates and blood pressure, higher fruit consumption, and spent more time exercising vigorously than rural students. Rural students had better lipid panel measurements, lower sweetened beverage and fried snack consumption, spent more time exercising moderately, and had less screen time than urban students.

Post-PHS intervention, urban students had greater improvements in lipid panel measures, fruit and fried snack consumption, and moderate exercise. Rural students had greater improvement in recovery heart rate and screen time habits. Essentially, physiological measurements that were worse at baseline saw the most improvement post-intervention in both the urban and rural populations.

PHS accompanies legislators on school visits

In April, Project Healthy Schools sent an introductory letter to about 75 Michigan senators and representatives who have one or more schools with the PHS program in their district. The letter provided a brief overview of the Building Healthy Communities: Engaging Middle Schools through Project Healthy Schools partnership and the work PHS is doing in the schools. Legislators were invited to learn more by visiting one of the schools in their district. Six legislators responded to the letter and three visited a school. More school visits are expected to take place in the fall.


Senator Polehanki listens to students at East Middle School. Representative Whiteford joins Hamilton Middle School students in trying a smoothie.
and implementing sustainable policy and environmental changes. Schools that have achieved all of these elements are recognized with the top level Gold award. The winning PHS schools include:

**Gold Award Winners**
- Allendale Middle School, Allendale
- John D. Pierce Middle School, Waterford
- MacDonald Middle School, East Lansing
- Negaunee Middle School, Negaunee
- Portland Middle School, Portland

**Silver Award Winners**
- Cherryland Middle School, Elk Rapids
- Creekside Middle School, Dexter
- DeWitt Middle School, DeWitt
- East Middle School, Plymouth
- Grass Lake Middle School, Grass Lake
- Powell Middle School, Washington
- St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School, Coldwater
- St. Mary Catholic School, Pinckney
- Thunder Bay Junior High School, Alpena
- University Preparatory Academy Middle School, Detroit
- Vista Charter Academy, Grand Rapids

**Bronze Award Winners**
- Bentley Middle School, Burton
- Pittsford Middle/High School, Pittsford

Congratulations to the above schools, their administrators, wellness champions and wellness teams for providing a shining example of what it takes to build a healthy school community.

**Nine new schools starting BHC:PHS this fall**

Nine new schools are starting the Building Healthy Communities: Engaging Middle Schools through Project Healthy Schools (BHC:PHS) program this fall. BHC:PHS is a partnership between Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Superior Health Foundation and the University of Michigan which, including the nine new schools, has brought the BHC:PHS program to 94 new schools since 2013.

This year, over 30 schools applied to the request for application that was sent out in February. After a thorough review process, which included telephone interviews with the administrator and wellness champions at the prospective schools, PHS selected the following nine schools:
- A.D. Johnston Junior & Senior High School, Bessemer
- Almont Middle School, Almont

**Thanks to our funding partners!**

Recognizing gifts of $5,000 and above

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- Bob and Ellen Thompson Foundation
- Brooke, Betsy, Albert L., Andrew, Paula & Albert M. Berriz
- DeRoy Testamentary Foundation
- Flora Family Foundation
- Marvin and Betty Danto Foundation
- McKinley, Inc.
- Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
- Michigan Health Endowment Fund
- Michigan Institute for Clinical Health Research
- Michigan Medicine
- Superior Health Foundation
- Tim and Laurie Wadhams
- Wetsman Foundation

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

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**Project Healthy Schools Locations 2019-2020**

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