School Wellness Weekly, Holiday Issue

Holiday Spirit

While the holidays are often associated with many sweet indulgences, let's turn our attention to healthier, but no less satisfying, ways of joining in the holiday spirit. Take the New York Road Runner's Jingle Bell Jog. Not only does a running event bring people together to raise money for a worthy cause (for NYRR's youth programs in many of our schools), but add runners with jingle bells and Santa suits, and you've got a spectator sport!

The creativity and spirit these events bring to a school or community are the ones that, over time, promote lifelong benefits. Such efforts at schools around the city contribute to an environment where true change is possible. Beginnings of change can be seen in improvements in NYC students' obesity rates (see coverage below). As you consider how you celebrate the holidays with students and families, remember that wellness is a small, steady undertaking with huge rewards we can all share.

Opportunities and Recognition

- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation Inventory Support in January:** If SWC grantees would like hands-on assistance completing the online Healthy Schools Program Inventory and Action Plan, contact Healthy Schools Program NY Relationship Manager Stephanie Myers to RSVP for an upcoming morning sessions in Brooklyn 1/11.
- **Winter *Swim for Life* Slots Open:** The NYCDOE along with NYC Parks, Asphalt Green, and the YMCA of Greater NY provide free swimming classes to 2nd grade students at locations throughout the city during the school day. In addition to teaching drowning prevention and basic swimming skills, this 10-week program can also count towards a school's required PE time. To see available slots, and for contact information, click here.
- **Free 2011-12 Wellness Calendars Available:** Schools can request up to 200 wellness calendars featuring students' winning poster designs from last year's School Wellness Poster Contest. To order these calendars, which promote the benefits of eating nutritious food and being physically fit, click and fill out the order form here.

Wellness in the News

- **City Obesity Rates coverage:** The overall obesity rates, measured using NYC FITNESSGRAM results, among NYC kindergartners through eighth graders decreased 5.5 percent since 2005, with the sharpest decline seen among children ages 5 to 6 years old. (press release, NY Times, Gotham Schools)
- Hip hopping to keep kids slim: Run DMC rapper advice on easy ways to lose weight (NY Daily News, 12/16)
- Reading, Writing and Recipes: Cooking in the Classroom at PS 3 (NY Times, 12/13)
- Upgrading School Lunches (Crain's NY Business, 12/11)

Featured Resource

Tai Chi For Kids is a great program that can build the capacity of your teachers to incorporate physical activity in new ways into your school day. Creator and producer Cari Shurman can train your teachers on controlled movements, visualization techniques, and a focus on breathing that can improve balance, self-control, strength, and flexibility for students during a ten minute classroom activity break or in a full physical education class session.

The Tai Chi program includes a full day visit to your school to train teachers in classes, before and after school, and/or during lunch periods, plus materials and DVDs for 20 teachers, so that Tai Chi can be used daily to enhance learning and wellness. We are offering a deeply discounted rate to the first 6 SWC grant recipients interested in using grant funds for one full day of professional development with Cari, materials, and DVDs ($435). Program training slots are available in late January and early February, so if you are interested in this opportunity, email Alice Goodman as soon as possible.

Additional Resources

- **Health Bulletin #90 from NYC DOHMH**: How to Prevent Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections

- **For your school's coaches:** Check out NASPE's New Coaches Toolbox, information and resources about safety and injury prevention, skill development, strength training, peak performance, post-workout recovery, nutrition, sport health care, sport psychology, professional development and college recruiting.
- **Call for Programs Application Available:** NYS AHPERD NYC Zone Conference, 1/30/12 at Progress High School in Brooklyn and Lehman High School in the Bronx, is accepting applications for programs. Click on the link above for more details.

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