Healthy School Communities

From time-to-time, this “e-newsletter” will be distributed to help provide schools with information regarding a variety of health promotion resources, upcoming healthy living opportunities, and local events. It is also an opportunity to recognize the many great events and activities happening within schools across P.E.I.! I hope you find it both useful and informative.

Please feel free to share it with other teachers, post in staff rooms, or forward to others within your “networks” who may be interested. - Thanks!

Winter Sun Awareness

Skin damage due to sun exposure is a year-round issue. In Canada, sunlight is strong enough to cause skin cancer and premature aging of the skin. The risk of skin cancer today is much greater than it was 20 years ago and continues to increase.

This winter keep sun safety in mind when:

Outdoors:
UV rays can get through clouds and snow can reflect and even increase the sun’s burning rays. Keeping active is important but remember to protect exposed skin when walking outdoors, skiing, sledding, shoveling, and snowshoeing.

Traveling South:
Take hats, shades and sunscreen with you. The sun’s rays are even stronger in tropical regions, so to prevent sunburn or skin damage: take an umbrella to the beach, seek shade under a tree, apply sunscreen frequently (SPF 15 or higher), and wear hats that cover the neck and ears.

Avoid Indoor Tanning:
No tan is a safe tan! Getting a base tan is a myth. Tans are evidence of skin damage and offers you no protection from further sun damage. You are twice as likely to develop skin cancer when using tanning beds and sun lamps. Twenty minutes in a tanning bed is equal to 4 hours of unprotected UV exposure. The Canadian Cancer Society supports the World Health Organization’s recommendation that tanning beds not be used by those 18 years and under.

P.E.I. WinterActive 2008

Get up, Go Out! Be WinterActive!

The P.E.I. WinterActive campaign is running from January 18 to February 29, 2008. This campaign is designed to encourage Islanders to participate in outdoor physical activity and focus on healthy eating. Themes have been created around making time for healthy living.

Winter Weekends

From January 18 to February 29 (and beyond) take the time to explore the beauty of the great outdoors during winter. Gather the family and go sledding, make a snowman, or take a nature hike. When you are all done, get together and prepare a nice healthy meal with everyone helping out. Spending time with your family enjoying healthy activities is TIME WELL SPENT.

Breezy Break-Times

From January 18 to February 29 (and beyond) use your break-time to re-energize your body for the task that awaits you. Whether you’re a student at recess, an office employee at break time, or a retiree in between engagements, bundle up and head outside for 10 minutes of activity and when you’re done fill your body with some nutritious foods to keep you going. Spending time on your personal health is TIME WELL SPENT.

Canada Games Activity Challenge

The P.E.I. Active Living Alliance is encouraging all Islanders to become involved in the Canada Games Activity Challenge. This challenge encourages Islanders to strive for greater levels of physical activity and provides a database to track activity levels. For more information on the challenge please click www.peialiveliving.com

Getting Caught being P.E.I. Active

A number of outdoor winter enthusiasts have been recruited to catch people being active throughout the campaign. If you are caught you will be presented with a P.E.I. Active reflective arm band. Please click www.winteractive.ca to go to the National WinterActive website. This site is filled with useful healthy living information.

For more information contact: Francois Caron at 432-2706.

For more information please contact the Canadian Cancer Society at 1-888-939-3333 or visit: www.cancer.ca
Healthy Fundraising at School

Many schools on P.E.I. have been fundraising using a variety of healthy options. Healthy fundraising is just one way of demonstrating that your school is committed to promoting healthy behaviours among students, staff, families and the community at large.

Healthy Fundraising:
- supports healthier students who learn better. Research shows that healthy lifestyles are linked to better behaviour and academic performance.
- supports classroom learning. Fundraising that reinforces healthy lifestyle choices also reinforces your school’s curriculum goals.
- supports a healthy school environment. Making healthy choices the easy choices will shape healthy habits.
- is for more than monetary returns. Schools that put health first discover that they are also supporting learning and development of students, building community, and social inclusion.

The P.E.I. Healthy Eating Alliance has developed a variety of healthy fundraising resources as part of the Healthy Eating Toolkit, which can be found at: www.gov.pe.ca/peihea/index.php3?number=1012589&lang=E

British Columbia recently released a healthy fundraising guide which you may find useful as well: www.dashbc.org/upload/Healthy%20Fundraising%20for%20Schools.pdf

Canadian Tire Jump-Start

Canadian Tire Jump-Start is a charitable program created by the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families to help kids in financial need participate in organized sports and recreation. Canadian Tire JumpStart provides funding to help offset the cost of registration fees, equipment and transportation. The P.E.I. Chapter is made up of community leaders from KidSport P.E.I., Recreation P.E.I. and Canadian Tire Associate Dealers. These organizations help to deliver the program effectively and identify kids who would benefit from the program.

This funding can be accessed for organized sports (soccer, baseball, basketball, competitive swimming, swimming lessons, racquet sports, etc.) and for recreational activities (Community Recreation Department programs, dance, gym and walking track memberships, swimming, yoga, pilates, aqua-fit, aerobics, bowling, activities for those that are physically and intellectually challenged, golf, cycling clubs, x-country skiing, etc.)

If you know of a student, or family, who may benefit from this support - please contact Recreation P.E.I. at (902) 892-6445 for more information.

From the Web!

National Non-Smoking Week

Although the National Non-Smoking Week has ended (January 20-27, 2008) there are still a wide variety of resources available on the web site. This year’s them was “Taking back my life from tobacco.” For further information, please check out: www.nnsdw.ca/index.html

This web site has also compiled a variety of facts sheets which are focused on a number of topics such as smoke-free homes, smoke-free cars, and second-hand smoke, which may be useful to you in some way. These fact sheets can be found at: www.nnsdw.ca/factsheets.html

Health Canada has recently launched a new campaign to promote general healthy eating concepts, to encourage effective use of nutrition labeling, as well as a social marketing campaign to encourage Canadians to make healthy lifestyle choices. Television ads will encourage Canadians to select healthy foods by using the nutrition information on food packages, to involve their children in shopping for food, and teach them about making healthy choices. Canadians are encouraged to visit the www.healthycanadians.ca or call 1-800-O-Canada to obtain tips and tools to regarding understanding nutrition information on food labels. This website also contains a great deal of information regarding others topics such as: Being Active, Going Smoke-free, Healthy Pregnancy, First Nations, Healthy Eating, and Food and Children’s Product Safety.

Do you have information / photos / projects to share?

If you have a story to share with other school about a program that worked in support of school health, an initiative, a change made at your school, a partnership with parents and/or the community - I would like to hear from you. Please send me a description and/or photos taken (with approval), feedback from students, comments made by parents etc. - and I would be more than happy to include them in the next issue of this newsletter.

Sharing your success stories may help another school which may be trying to do the same thing - but may just not know of others who have already had some success. Schools to schools, parent to parents, communities to communities - we make a huge difference in the health and well-being of students.

For school health information or support - please contact:
Sterling Carruthers
School Health Specialist
P.E.I. Department of Education
Phone: 368-4682
E-mail sdcaruthers@edu.pe.ca