



# MICHIGAN TEAM NUTRITION

RESULTS FROM 2002-2003 HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT MINI-GRANTS

## Successfully Transforming School Environments to Support Healthy Eating and Physical Activity



### WHY BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT?

- The number of overweight children is increasing at an alarming rate.
- Unhealthy eating habits and lack of physical activity play an important role in childhood overweight.
- Schools play a key role in creating an environment where students can improve their food choices and be active. Ninety-nine percent of children ages 7-13 are enrolled in school.

### THE SOLUTION CAN LEAD TO POSITIVE CHANGES!

Selected results follow from 12 Michigan schools that completed a Team Nutrition Healthy School Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment Mini-grant in 2002-2003. Changes occurred during the mini-grant period and into the next school year.

- A pop machine was removed from a middle school; only water, juice and milk are sold at that school now.
- Milk sales increased in two schools, one school added fat free milk as a new option.
- A milk/calcium initiative offered at one school was offered later at five other schools in the same district.
- Two schools changed recess to occur before lunch to help decrease plate waste and improve behavior in lunchroom and classroom.
- Several activity nights were offered for students and families.
- An additional school nurse was hired in a large urban district.

#### Grant Coordinators reported positive changes in school meals as a result of the grant such as:

- An increase in the variety of foods offered.
- Introduction of new themes to increase student interest and participation.
- Decisions are being made about the school menu based on student input.
- Addition of new fruits and vegetables and more of them.
- School menus now have more baked and less fried items.
- Nutrition information is going home to parents on the school menu.
- Provision of daily salad bars, chef salads, and ethnic meals.

### A SOLUTION

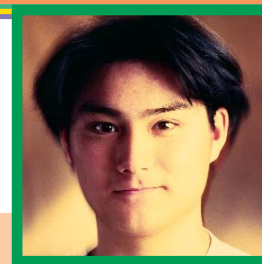
**Michigan Team Nutrition is taking steps to improve students' food and physical activity choices.** Michigan Team Nutrition is successfully working with schools to make, sustain, and expand on positive changes in the school nutrition and physical activity environment in order to offer and promote healthy choices for students. Changing the school environment, and developing or implementing policies so there are opportunities throughout the day for students to select healthy food and beverages, and participate in physical activity is one approach to decreasing the number of Michigan students with unhealthy weights.

- A fundraiser of flower sales instead of candy was planned by the Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) and held by a school the following year.
- Physical Education teachers at five schools completed the Michigan-developed Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum training.

# HOW DID THESE CHANGES OCCUR?

In 2002-2003, Michigan Team Nutrition provided mini-grants of up to \$3,000 to 12 schools located throughout Michigan. These 12 schools...

- Consisted of four elementary schools, three middle schools, three high schools, one K-8 school and one K-12 school. The total enrollment for participating schools was 6,959 students.
- Formed a coordinated school health team consisting of school administrators, teachers, food service directors, parents, students and community members.
- Were led by trained facilitators many of whom were county Michigan State University Extension staff members.
- Assessed current school practices related to nutrition and physical activity using the *Changing the Scene* kit from USDA.
- Prioritized needs identified by the assessment and developed an action plan to target these needs.
- Implemented a plan to make at least one positive change in their school environment related to nutrition and/or physical activity.
- Evaluated changes made towards a healthy school environment.



Follow-up telephone interviews found that nearly all schools sustained and expanded their progress.

## THE FUTURE

Michigan Team Nutrition is committed to supporting and promoting healthy school nutrition and physical activity environments. Mini-grants to 12 additional schools to use *Changing the Scene* were provided in 2003-2004. In 2004-2005, mini-grants again will be awarded to 15 Michigan schools that assess their school environment. (Check the Michigan Team Nutrition Web site for more information on these and other grants.)

These new schools will use a new assessment tool, the Healthy School Action Tool (HSAT), which was developed through the collaborative efforts of the Michigan Department of Community Health, the Michigan Department of Education, Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Team Nutrition and United Dairy Industry of Michigan. For more information on HSAT go to [www.mihealthtools.org/schools](http://www.mihealthtools.org/schools).



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## ABOUT TEAM NUTRITION

Team Nutrition is a national USDA initiative designed to motivate, encourage and empower schools, families and the community to work together to continually improve school meals and help students and families make food and physical activity choices for a healthy lifestyle. Team Nutrition schools make a commitment to help children eat healthy and be physically active; they receive free resources and are eligible to apply for grants to support changes in their school environment. More than 800 Michigan schools are enrolled in Team Nutrition.

## Working Together in Michigan

Organizations in Michigan are partnering to help schools improve their nutrition and physical activity environments. Mini-grants to improve school environments were and will be awarded to Michigan schools by the Michigan Department of Community Health, the Michigan Department of Education, Michigan State University Extension, Team Nutrition and United Dairy Industry of Michigan. There is also a statewide coalition, Michigan Action for Healthy Kids (MAFHK), that brings together nearly 600 people representing nearly 250 Michigan public and private organizations. MAFHK is working to help Michigan schools find and implement solutions to improve students' nutrition and physical activity. For more info on MAFHK go to [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org) and click on "Michigan" under "Select Your State."

## Michigan State University Extension and the Michigan Department of Education in Partnership

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