

YOUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH

IN PITTSBURGH

Highmark Healthy High 5:

HELPING KIDS ACHIEVE LIFELONG GOOD HEALTH – IN FIVE KEY AREAS

Highmark Healthy High 5 helps kids, ages 6–18, to develop lifelong healthy behaviors in five key areas: nutrition, physical activity, grieving support, self-esteem and bullying prevention. The initiative aims to create a culture of good health through what academics call children's health promotion.

"We've long known – and research supports – that the healthy habits that children develop when young will con-

tinue with them into adulthood," explains Yvonne Cook, president of the Highmark Foundation.

That's why, in 2006, the Highmark Foundation created Highmark Healthy High 5 through a \$100 million donation from Highmark Inc. Key health indicators showed that children in Pennsylvania were struggling with understanding good nutrition, finding the opportunity for physical exercise and coping with complex emotions. Today, the healthy impact of the initiative is resonating throughout the Commonwealth, in our own backyards.

"More than 1 million kids across Pennsylvania have benefited from Highmark Healthy High 5 since its introduction," says Cook. "The initiative is provid-

Highmark Healthy High 5 emphasizes good health for kids through:

- NUTRITION
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- GRIEVING SUPPORT
- SELF-ESTEEM
- BULLYING PREVENTION

ing our children with tools, knowledge and skills to enhance their physical and emotional well-being. We're reaching kids in the classroom, on the playground, in the gym, through Web-based activities and in after-school programs."

Highmark Healthy High 5 relies on proven, evidence-based partnership programs – for example, with the SPARK Active Recreation program

and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Partners are chosen specifically for their demonstrated outcomes for engaging children, parents, school personnel and the community in the pursuit of healthier behaviors – and healthier environments.

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At Larosa, SPARK Is a Hit

During after-school play at the Larosa Boys and Girls Club in McKeesport, Jeff (as we'll call him) was shy and awkward. While the neighborhood stars, ages 5–12, came out to play football and basketball, Jeff stood all by himself.

But that was not acceptable to coordinator Mandy Haines. That's not the way to a healthy lifestyle – and healthy self-esteem – for Jeff and many other kids who may not be top athletes. So, for the past 15 months, Haines has been trying a new approach: The Highmark

Healthy High 5 SPARK Active Recreation program. "The best part of the SPARK program," she says, "is that everyone can succeed."

SPARK helps kids of all skill levels discover what's inherent in all of them – their built-in energy and their innate enjoyment of fun and fitness. A nationally recognized physical activity program, SPARK is designed for children ages 5–14, promoting moderate to vigorous activities for up to one hour daily and establishing lifelong healthy behaviors. At Larosa, every day at 4 p.m. some 50 kids play tag, kickball or flag grab; toss bean bags at cones; or shoot Frisbees into hula hoops. "They can succeed with these types of

activities," Haines says. "Once they succeed, they have more self-esteem. Every kid can feel confident about some activity. That's the great thing about SPARK."

So, if basketball isn't for Jeff, crazy cones are. "At first, the kids didn't warm up to crazy cones," Haines says. "Then, when they improved their throwing, they liked it a lot. Because crazy cones are not about who's the best or fastest or strongest. They're about accuracy. Everybody encourages each other. Everybody has a really good time. So, kids like Jeff who are shy at the beginning of the year aren't shy at the end." ■



At the Larosa Boys and Girls Club in McKeesport, everyone succeeds in the SPARK after-school recreation program. SPARK is being utilized at more than 140 sites across Pennsylvania.

COMBATING CHILDHOOD OBESITY with eTools Technology

Beginning in 2002, Highmark's health records indicated a distinct jump in the incidence of type 2 diabetes among its insured children. Prior to that, type 2 diabetes was practically unheard of among children. The culprit: obesity.

Then, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the same trend nationally. CDC data showed that since the mid-1970s, kids and adults have had a sharply higher incidence of being overweight or obese, leading to higher rates of hypertension, heart disease and diabetes.

Finally came state and federal mandates requiring schools to capture student Body Mass Index (BMI) and create wellness policies to address physical activity and nutrition in schools. But how, without resources?

Highmark Healthy High 5 responded by arming educators, school nurses, administrators and food service professionals with a sophisticated tool that facilitates policy, practice and curriculum changes to address nutritional and physical fitness deficiencies in their own school environments. The tool: Highmark Healthy High 5 Health eTools for Schools, offered free to schools in the Highmark Foundation's service area through 2013.

"It's a secure, Web-based portal that enables schools to both comply with federal and state mandates for improving student wellness and develop a proactive, coordinated approach to

obesity reduction, based on best practices," explains Martha L. Harris, co-founder of InnerLink, with whom the Highmark Foundation has contracted to develop the program.

Highmark Healthy High 5 Health eTools for Schools can have a positive impact on the menus in the cafeteria, the fitness activities in gym class, nutrition lessons in health class and more.

"It encompasses better health data collection, including BMI screenings, better health record keeping and more strategic use of aggregated student health data to formulate strategies for particular school populations," says Harris.

As a high-tech tool, Health eTools allows health data to be recorded and reported to the state and to parents more efficiently, allowing school health professionals much more time to spend with students. As a way of aggregating data as a catalyst for change, it has the capability to support changes in the menus in the cafeteria, the fitness activities in gym class, the way nutrition is taught in health class, acquisition of new equipment and programs, and a whole range of other potential ways for reducing obesity.

Thus far, some 400,000 students in more than 800 Pennsylvania school buildings have benefitted from the program. And 44 percent of the schools are using Health eTools to measure BMI.

"Ultimately, the goal is to create healthier students, who, research shows, make better learners," summarizes Harris. ■

To see if Health eTools is in your schools, visit www.healthtoolsforschools.org.

In Pittsburgh Public Schools, Nurses Can Focus More on Student Health

Billy, a Bloomfield middle schooler, watched his weight spike 30-plus pounds.

More importantly, the nurse practitioner at school saw it, too. Using Highmark Healthy High 5 Health eTools for Schools – a secure, Web-based portal for improving student wellness – she was able to document the boy's weight gain and quickly generate the yearly report to Billy's parents on his Body Mass Index (BMI), which is mandated in schools by the Commonwealth.

Some 37 nurse practitioners in 68 Pittsburgh Public Schools – plus more than 40 private and parochial schools within the city – are using Health eTools for Schools to get the paperwork done much more efficiently, "allowing a lot more on-task time to talk with kids and parents about issues related to health such as a sudden weight loss or gain," explains Janet Yuhasz, M.Ed., the Pittsburgh Public School's student wellness coordinator.

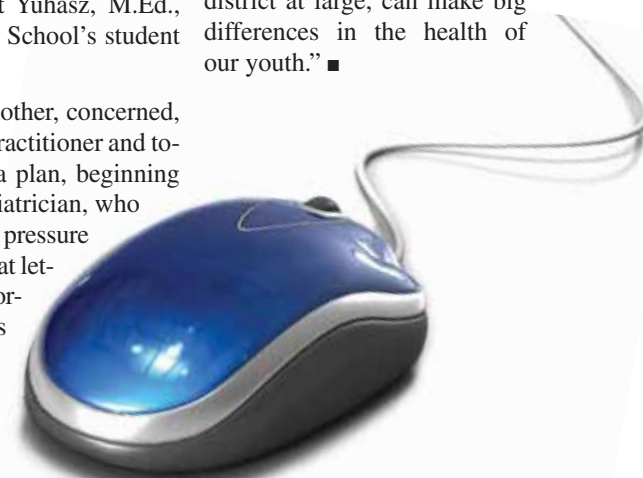
In Billy's case, his mother, concerned, contacted the nurse practitioner and together they devised a plan, beginning with a trip to the pediatrician, who diagnosed high blood pressure and pre-diabetes. "That letter opens up an important dialogue," says Yuhasz. "We worked with him on smaller, more frequent meals, more move-



In the Pittsburgh region, nurses at 289 schools are using Health eTools to record student health data more efficiently, freeing up time to address student health concerns.

ment such as walking more places to increase energy output, and he got his weight back into a healthy range.

"Health eTools is making a positive impact. Every change we can make individually for a child, or in the district at large, can make big differences in the health of our youth." ■



Through Highmark Healthy High 5's Health eTools for Schools, children's collective health data, including Body Mass Index (BMI), is a catalyst for health-related changes at school.

Taking the Fear Out of Growing Up

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a schoolchild is bullied every seven minutes. And every day, more than 160,000 students miss school because of the fear of being bullied. Bullying comes in many forms: exclusion

“Safe school environments are critical to the academic success of students.”

*Matthew Masiello, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Windber Research Institute
Architect of Highmark Healthy High 5 HALT!
A Bullying Prevention Program*

from groups, threatening messages, repeated teasing and taunting and physical violence.

Children who are bullied have lower self-esteem, higher rates of depression

and more incidence of suicidal thinking. Furthermore, bullying impacts school performance and attendance. It leads to physical health problems. And it's been clearly tied to episodes of school violence.

For that reason, Highmark Healthy High 5 is supporting the very best bullying prevention programs developed in the world.

Through both Highmark Healthy High 5 HALT!® and PA CARES, the Highmark Foundation has awarded more than \$5.1 million to fund programs through 2010 in 400 schools across Pennsylvania. Both programs help schools to implement the internationally renowned, evidence-based Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. For more than 25 years, the Olweus program has produced excellent results, decreasing bullying behaviors among children in grades K–10 between 20 and 70 percent. It includes interventions at the

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In middle schools, students learn about bullying behaviors and preventions through teacher-led role-playing sessions that result in healthier school environments.

Mt. Lebanon and Allegheny Valley Reducing Bullying Behaviors

A fourth-grade girl from suburban Pittsburgh arrived home distraught after her first classroom session about bullying.

“I know they must have meant me,” she wailed. “I bully people. I leave them out.”

During the second session – ways to change behavior – she learned that she should include a little boy who’s always left out. “Let’s see if he wants to play with us,” she suggested.

Your Child May Be Bullied If He/She:

- Comes home with torn or damaged clothing
- Has unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- Is afraid of going to school
- Appears sad, moody, teary or depressed
- Has low self-esteem

“That’s exactly what we want to happen,” Highmark Healthy High 5 HALT! trainer Jim Bozigar says. “We want the kids to see what they’re doing, how it’s hurtful and how to change it.”

Since 2006, the Highmark Foundation has been bringing the internationally renowned, evidence-based Olweus program into schools through Highmark Healthy High 5 HALT! – A Bullying Prevention Program.

The results have been spectacular. After classroom sessions on bullying, teasing, exclusion, intimidation, theft and physical violence beginning in



According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a school child is bullied every seven minutes.

2007, Mt. Lebanon has realized a significant reduction in reported bullying at its Washington Elementary, based on preliminary data.

In Allegheny Valley, “We had classroom meetings to teach bystanders to report and stop bullying,” offers special education director Roberta Rowan.

“If, for example, a child is excluded from the lunch table, the students must develop alternative behaviors that are inclusive, implemented and monitored by teachers and staff.” The high school there reduced discipline reports by 30 percent between the fall of 2007 and the fall of 2008. ■

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Never tell your child to “ignore” bullying.
- Don’t blame your child or assume your child provoked the bullying.
- Encourage your child to talk about the bullying with you.
- Tell your child that bullying is wrong and that you’re glad he or she had the courage to discuss it.
- Don’t encourage physical retaliation against the bully such as “hit him back.”
- Take quick action. Contact a teacher, school counselor or principal immediately about the bullying.
- Work closely with school personnel to resolve the problem. Describe how and where your child is being bullied so that a school principal or teacher can witness the bullying.
- Remember that all children have the right to feel safe.
- Help your children to develop healthy friendships with students at school. A child who has friends is less likely to be bullied.
- Ensure that your child feels safe and well-loved at home.

Funding Schools' Wish Lists

"Thank you for such a positive addition to our school."

"With your help, I truly believe that we have inspired our students and their families to make healthy living a habit."

These are the kinds of responses that the Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge grant program inspires.



The School Challenge grant program provides funding that enables schools and physical education teachers to change the face of physical education in their schools by developing innovative programs that teach lifelong wellness. Most of the grants are written by teachers with a vision and passion for what would make a difference in their school.

Schools are invited ("challenged") to submit proposals for programs that will measurably improve the overall health status of students. All schools within the Highmark Foundation's 49-county Pennsylvania service area are eligible to apply for grants up to \$10,000 per building each year.

Since 2007, Highmark Healthy High 5 has awarded \$3.5 million in school challenge grants to 496 schools in 47 Pennsylvania counties.

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\$3.5 MILLION FOR 496 P

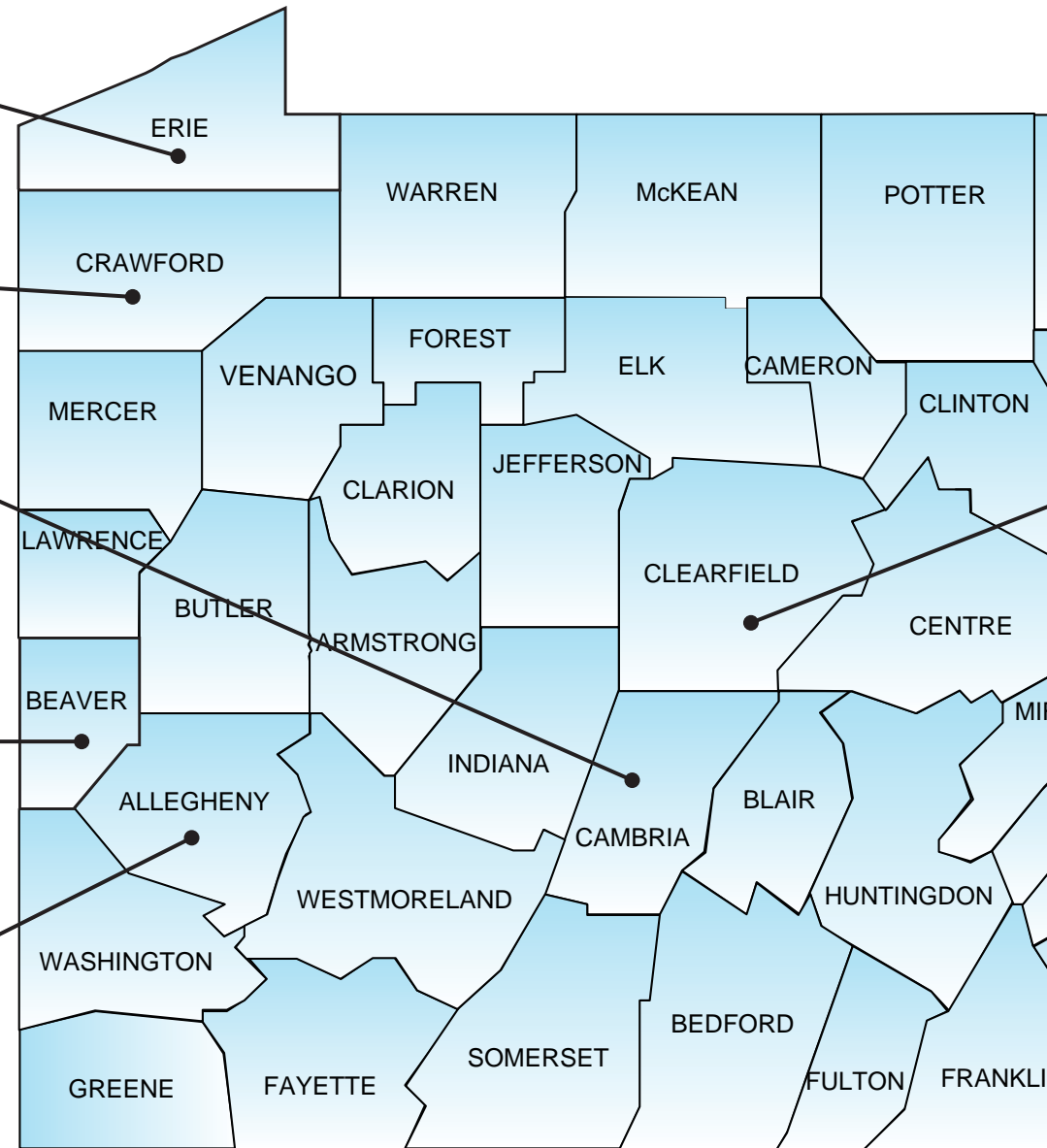
School District of the City of Erie - Woodrow Wilson Middle School
A bullying prevention program
\$10,000

Diocese of Erie - Seton Catholic School
The Dance Around the World for Fitness and Fun program
\$4,950

Diocese of Altoona - Johnstown - Bishop McCort Catholic High School
Cardiovascular equipment for the physical education program
\$10,000

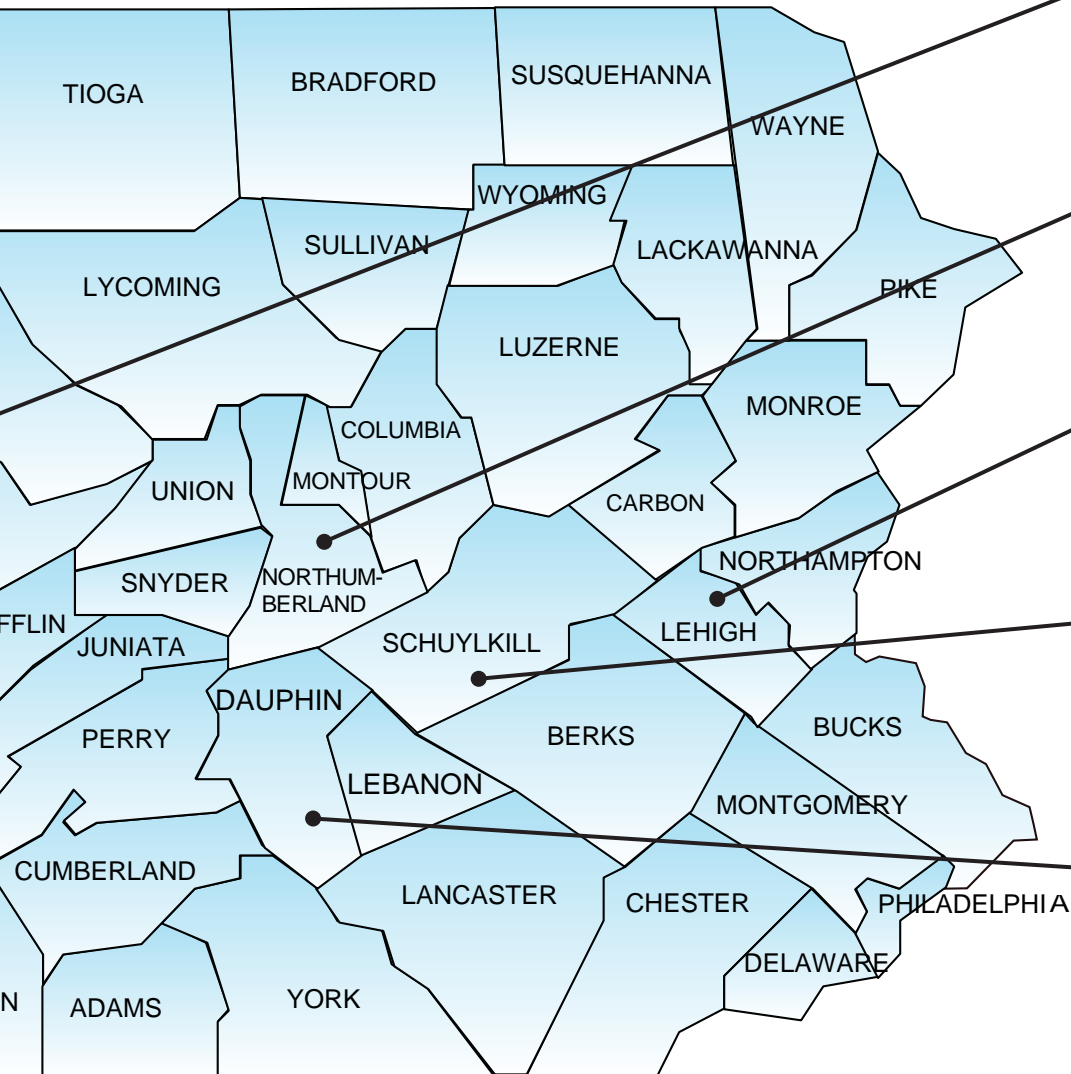
New Brighton Area School District - New Brighton Area Elementary School
Nutrition program materials and Dance Dance Revolution physical education equipment
\$4,345

Pittsburgh Public School District - Pittsburgh Colfax K-8
A handicap-accessible playground
\$10,000



"The Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge grant program puts grant money right in the hands of schools, creating a direct, positive and powerful impact on the lifelong good health of our kids," says Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett.

PA SCHOOLS SINCE 2007



Fitness Rocks at Gateway Middle School

It was “Fitness Rocks” that really got the Gateway Middle School students up and moving. “Wow!” one boy said. “I’ve never sweated so much in a gym class!”

Using a Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge grant, Gateway purchased 30 iPods and earphones for students to use in fitness classes. “Our program, which we subtitled ‘Rockin’ On Can Keep You Strong,’ was a collaborative project between music and physical education,” says music teacher Kelly Cornelius. Using the software program Audacity, students synchronized and sequenced a workout program to their own staff-supervised music – Boston to Cindy Lauper, Gorillaz to Hannah Montana.

In the weight room, as the students rotate from barbells to leg presses, rowing machines to ellipticals, one minute at each, the music reflects their workout. Paced by five seconds of classical music (teacher’s choice) for resting, each minute of high-intensity rock gets students through 20-minute workouts. “When asked to reflect on the project,” Cornelius says, “the students say they enjoy it and feel they definitely are improving their physical fitness.

“I thought it worked very well,” she adds. “We’re trying to decrease our students’ Body Mass Index (BMI) and increase their physical activities. The iPods helped make their cardiovascular workouts more interesting to them, especially for those who weren’t so active. They were excited about the technology, excited about the music, and so they became excited about their physical education classes as well.” ■

school building – primarily for physical education and wellness programs – where it can have Pennsylvania’s Secretary of Education Gerald Zahorchak.

Families Find Healing at the Highmark Caring Place in Pittsburgh



Terry Waters, Sr. and son Terry III, turned to the Highmark Caring Place for healing after Terry III lost his mother at the age of 8.

After his mom's sudden death in 2004, 8-year-old Terry Waters III just went numb. "He was in a distant place," his father, Terry Sr., recalls. "He was on the verge of shutting down altogether."

His father took a schoolteacher's advice and called the Highmark Caring Place location in downtown Pittsburgh. "It was the warmest welcome that a person could ever have," Terry Sr. says. "I said, 'we're home.'"

Since 1997, the Highmark Caring Place, A Center for Grieving Children, Adolescents and Their Families, has served more than 30,000 family members and community partners at its facilities in Pittsburgh, Erie, Lemoyne and Warrendale. Supported by Highmark Healthy High 5, an initiative of the Highmark Foundation, the Caring Place is also helping communities lacking grieving facilities to develop programs that follow the Highmark

Caring Place model through a commitment of \$1.3 million from the Highmark Foundation for six facilities.

Every other week, families gather at the Caring Place for its 10-meeting program. First, they share a meal together; then, they break into groups, with parents and guardians together, and children together, grouped by age. The children engage in a variety of activities, from making memory boxes to creating "feeling" masks, to releasing balloons with messages to the person who died.

"The Caring Place allows children the opportunity to grieve alongside their peers," offers Program Manager Andrea Lurier, Ph.D. "This takes away the feeling that 'I'm so different and alone.' And through the sharing and playing, they discover that it's okay to be happy again."

As for Terry III, "the fourth time here," his father says, "he started opening up, letting me know what he was feeling. Then, everything started falling back into place." Schoolwork, friendships, even his bowling score skyrocketed.

"The love pours out of the walls," Terry Sr. adds. "That's why it's called the Caring Place. A lot of care goes on here. A lot." ■

How to help a grieving child

- Let him know that he is not alone in his grief.
- Encourage her to share her feelings, memories and experiences.
- Make him aware that what he is going through is natural and normal.
- Let her know that hope and healing are possible.
- Provide him with the support of family and peers.
- Realize that she may feel more fearful one year after the death than right away.
- Understand that he may feel a lower sense of self-worth two years after the death.
- Understand that the only way through grief is to grieve. Allow the time, the space and the places to grieve.
- Visit www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org for more information about grieving support for children.

THE FREE, INTERACTIVE, ONLINE WAY to be healthy!

Being healthy is lots of fun. And learning to be healthy can also be tons of fun! Especially when it's free, it's interactive and it involves lots of games and activities – including award-winning online innovation and design.

That's the approach taken by the Susan P. Byrnes Health Education Center in York, Pa., Highmark Healthy High 5's partner in creating www.LearntobeHealthy.org, a leading online resource for health education. The resource provides teachers with free, standards-based lesson plans and students with free educational

games and activities – all focused around making healthy choices.

A national award-winning program, LearntobeHealthy.org has been utilized by more than 2,800 educators and 235,000 students in 444 school districts across the Highmark Foundation service area. A study has shown that students performed significantly better on a knowledge test of nutrition after completing the site's nutrition curriculum as part of their health class.

"The goal of the site is to teach and inspire students and families to make healthy choices. We hope to complete the circle of learning so that students are encouraged to be healthy at school, home and in the community setting," says Marcia Meehan, president and chief executive officer of the Susan P. Byrnes Health Education Center.

"Staying healthy isn't about starting a new diet or fitness regime... it should really be a way of life," Meehan explains. "And LearntobeHealthy.org is committed to continually expanding and refreshing its engaging activities, promising to bring its visitors back again and again for new information and activities related to lifelong health." ■

Visit the site today!
www.LearntobeHealthy.org



“T.R.U.E. Cards...Life Lessons” Available Free



by the Heartwood Institute, leaders in creating educational materials for children that help them to develop a basic moral framework.

The 49 T.R.U.E. Cards introduce students to seven core attributes: courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty and love. Typically, teachers introduce the cards to students and have them write what the quotes mean to them for discussion with their classmates.

Best of all, the packages of “T.R.U.E. Cards...Life Lessons” were provided free of charge to more than 2,000 schools in the Highmark Foundation’s 49-county service area. More than a quarter of the schools have requested additional sets of cards, and surveys of educators show that 80 percent find the cards to be valuable and would recommend them to others. They’re still available free of charge, by request, to every public,

charter and private school located in the Highmark Foundation’s service area.

“The full package includes the 49 beautifully illustrated cards, detailed instructions, an attribute poster and a training DVD for using the package in educational or home settings,” explains Chris Sandvig, executive director of The Heartwood Institute, the partner in the program. “The T.R.U.E. Cards program is intended to inspire learning and conversation around the seven core attributes, and it’s aligned with Pennsylvania’s academic standards in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening.” ■

For information or to request T.R.U.E. Cards, visit www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org.

“A hero is someone who knows how to hang on one minute longer.”

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

Each of these quotations is an example of an inspirational message for children that appears on one of 49 different 5" x 8" T.R.U.E. Cards, accompanied by child-friendly four-color illustrations of children employing the wisdom of the quotation.

Highmark Healthy High 5 “T.R.U.E. Cards...Life Lessons” is a character-building and self-esteem tool specially developed for 8 to 13-year-old children

Highmark Healthy High 5
continued from page 1

Examples of How It Works

- In their schools, students learn about the adverse health, social and educational effects of **bullying** through the Olweus Program, which applies 25 years of experience in bullying prevention to achieve 20–70 percent reductions in student reports of being bullied or bullying others.
- At the Highmark Caring Place, A Center for Grieving Children, Adolescents and Their Families, **grieving children and their caregivers** find healing through a program based on peer-group support.

With four locations throughout the state, the Caring Place has reached more than 30,000 children, families and community partners. The Highmark Foundation is extending the reach of the Caring Place by partnering with additional facilities across the state that are replicating the program to reach even more families.

“More than 1 million kids across Pennsylvania have benefited from Highmark Healthy High 5 since its introduction in 2006.”

Yvonne Cook, President, Highmark Foundation

- Through school challenge grants, Pennsylvania schools are challenged to implement innovative new **fitness and wellness programs** with outcome-based goals. Schools have

acquired spinning bikes, climbing walls, Dance Dance Revolution, yoga mats, mountain bikes and even snowshoes.

“Through Highmark Healthy High 5, we’re directly addressing kids’ prevailing health problems such as obesity and bullying, working to help reverse negative health trends,”

concludes Cook. “And we’re helping kids learn about positive healthy behaviors that will enable them to enjoy longer, healthier lives than generations before.” ■

Accomplished Through Strong Partnerships

Highmark Healthy High 5 is delivered to our kids predominantly through strong partnership programs. Our partners are experts in delivering proven, evidence-based programs that include training, educational materials and a variety of creative, hands-on learning experiences. Partners and programs include:

- **SPARK Active Recreation**, in support of noncompetitive after-school and physical recreation programs
- **InnerLink, Inc.**, contracted to create **Highmark Healthy High 5 Health eTools for Schools**, in support of school wellness policies and programs
- **Windber Research Institute**, in support of **Highmark Healthy High 5 HALT!® – A Bullying Prevention Program**
- **PA CARES**, made available through the Center for Safe Schools, in support of training educators in bullying prevention
- **Highmark Healthy High 5 Bullying Prevention Institute** in support of training educators in bullying prevention
- **Highmark Caring Place, A Center for Grieving Children, Adolescents and Their Families**, in support of grieving families
- **Susan P. Byrnes Health Education Center**, creator of **LearntobeHealthy.org**, in support of lifelong healthy choices
- **The Heartwood Institute**, creator of **Highmark Healthy High 5 “T.R.U.E. Cards...Life Lessons,”** in support of moral character development and self-esteem
- **Penn State Hershey Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion**, creator of **nrg Powered by Choice**, in support of student-initiated nutrition and fitness programs
- **KidShape®**, a weight-management program for children

Empowering Teens

to Employ Their Own Ideas Promoting Good Health



Ultimate Frisbee fundraisers are one way teens work through nrg to fund their own healthy programs in their schools and communities.

The nrg Powered by Choice campaign, funded by Highmark Healthy High 5, empowers teens, ages 13–18, to promote nutrition and physical activity to their peers and younger children. Teens can also hold a fundraising event to purchase equipment that will make a healthy change in their school or community recreation center. The program was developed by Highmark Healthy High 5 partner, the Penn State Hershey Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion.

More than 200 schools serving 100,000-plus students have received kits from the center and Highmark Healthy High 5 to promote healthy living and implement a healthy change in their school or community. In one year's time, the schools participat-

ing in nrg are seeing a 2 to 3 percent reduction in population of overweight and obese students – very encouraging preliminary results.

Teens! Develop your very own healthy program through nrg.

Through nrg Powered by Choice, one Pennsylvania school raised \$1,400 for equipment for its physical education program. The students there hosted an nrg Ultimate Frisbee® Tournament fundraiser.

More than 240 students participated.

Some other ideas? A student council could rally the student body to fund-raise for a climbing wall for physical education classes.

Or a student activity group could hold an event to fund-raise for a healthy vending machine to be installed at school.

“The possibilities are endless,” says Allison Topper, executive director of the center. “And nrg Powered by Choice provides teens with the framework needed to lead the movements to create a healthier tomorrow for today's youth.” ■

Visit www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org for more information on nrg Powered by Choice.

Taking the Fear Out of Growing Up continued from page 3

individual, classroom, schoolwide and community levels in support of bullying prevention.

HALT! includes a program for teens and onsite technical assistance. PA CARES is run by the Center for Safe Schools, which is the Pennsylvania Department of Education's agency that is responsible for school safety.

In addition, through the Highmark Healthy High 5 Bullying Prevention Institute, the Highmark Foundation provides professional development training to increase the skill level of those adults involved in bullying prevention, emphasizing best practice solutions and awarding participants with continuing education credits. Currently, more than 1,200 school personnel have attended the Institute's sessions.

The initiative is timely because Pennsylvania schools were required by Jan. 1, 2009, to adopt bullying prevention policies. “The Highmark Healthy High 5 initiative is leading the way in providing schools in our state with the funding, support and training to comply with an amendment to the school code that requires all Pennsylvania public school districts to adopt a bullying prevention policy in 2009,” says Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education Gerald Zahorchak.

After all, bullying prevention is crucial to good overall physical health, and especially to success in school. “Safe school environments are critical to the academic success of students,” says Matthew Masiello, M.D., architect of the Highmark Healthy High 5 HALT! program. “If students are worried about their safety in school, their focus gets diverted, making it exceedingly difficult to succeed academically.” ■

Visit www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org.

Funding Schools' Wish Lists continued from page 4

“The Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge grant program puts grant money right in the school building – primarily for physical education and wellness programs – where it can have a direct, positive and powerful impact on the lifelong good health of our kids,” offers Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education Gerald Zahorchak.

For example, in 2008, many schools used their grants to purchase the Dance Dance Revolution program. Others have purchased climbing walls, snowshoes or mountain bikes. Some have purchased exercise bikes, steppers, treadmills or elliptical machines.

One school developed an after-school Hip Hop dance program, while another constructed a quarter-mile oval walking track. One school implemented a nutrition program that included the planting of a vegetable garden. And another taught nutrition through a “Kids in the Kitchen” cooking program.

“The schools are creative and very forward thinking about how to continue to advance healthy behaviors among their students, and we're now able to develop guidelines on best practices from the program,” adds Kweilin Nassar, Highmark Healthy High 5's project director. “If it's new, different or trendy, all the better to engage the kids. And healthy kids are academically successful kids.” ■

Suggest that your school applies for a school challenge grant. Visit www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org.

HALT, Healthy High 5, Health eTools for Schools and the hand in the hand symbol are registered marks of the Highmark Foundation.

Highmark is a registered mark of Highmark Inc. KidShape is a registered program of the KidShape Foundation.

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