

News Release

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10th Anniversary of “Project ACES” Physical Activity Challenge!

All 23 Carroll County public elementary schools and three private schools (Carroll Lutheran School, North Carroll Community School and Gerstell Academy) are participating in the tenth annual “**Project ACES - Active Children Excel in School**” challenge aimed at improving health by increasing daily physical activity. The challenge, which runs from October 6-19, 2008 is sponsored by the Carroll County Children’s Heart Health Action Team. Students in kindergarten to fifth grades as well as teachers and staff will track the amount of time spent each day being physically active, aiming for a total of at least **60** minutes a day.

Activities can include brisk walking, playing, bike riding, dancing, sports, martial arts, yardwork and housework. Students can count active time at school recess and gym class. Some schools are having special events to promote the physical activity message, such as fun runs, before and after-school walking clubs and fitness clubs for students and staff. Teachers and staff are encouraged to take part as well to track their activity and are striving to win a staff luncheon and banner for their school.

Over the past nine years, Project ACES has had 46,468 student entries and awarded \$42,250 to schools for physical education and health programs. Last fall, 25 schools took part with **8,968** students and **623** staff completing the two-week challenge. Over 600 student prizes will be awarded, including t-shirts, memberships to family fitness centers, games and sports prizes. Two bicycles will be awarded, plus prizes from PTA's and PTO's. Schools will earn trophies and award funds for participation.

The Children’s Heart Health Action Team reminds families that regular physical activity strengthens the heart, lungs and muscles, provides energy, helps control weight, and relieves stress. It can also make students more alert to perform better in school. Most of all, it’s fun! Parents can be good role models by staying active with their children and setting limits on time spent watching television, playing video games and computer games. Encouraging all young people to be more active, along with making good nutrition choices, can help fight the rising rates of childhood obesity and diabetes. Choosing more physical activity, healthy foods, and being tobacco-free work together for a healthy heart.

The Children’s Heart Health Team includes the Carroll County Health Department, Carroll County Public Schools, Carroll Community College, Carroll Hospital Center, Cigarette Restitution Fund Program, SAFE KIDS Coalition, Department of Recreation and Parks, The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, Inc. and Westminster City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Awards for schools and students will be announced in November. For more information, call 410-876-4984 or 410-751-3056.