

Input welcome!

Spring Quarterly Meeting—April 3, 2009: The Spring Quarterly Meeting of the DPH Nutrition & Physical Activity Project is scheduled for Friday, April 3, 2009. The buffet breakfast and networking opportunity will begin at 10:00 am and the meeting will start at 10:30 am. The quarterly meeting will once again take place at the Inn at Middletown, 70 Main Street, Middletown, CT.

The meeting will follow the theme "Where we are and where we go from here". Program speakers will include **Dr. Mario Garcia** of the CT Department of Public Health, **Dr. Michael Frechette**, Superintendent of Schools, Middletown, CT, and **Susan A. Furbish** of the Husky Service Learning—Public Health/Public Services Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, University of Connecticut. The agenda will also include observations from **Principal Sheila Brown** of Kathleen Goodwin School in Old Saybrook, CT, **Principal Amy Clark** of Middletown's Spencer School, as well as comments from some of the implementation teachers including **Bonnie Gaboury**, **Colleen Cardinal**, and **Amanda Amtmanis**. **If you wish to attend the meeting, please contact Program Manager Marie Russell at russelm@chc1.com.**

Teacher Focus Groups: Dates will soon be announced for the Teacher Focus Group Meetings that will take place in late April and early May. These meetings, which will be conducted by staff from the Yale Consultation Center, will serve to gather information directly from the classroom teachers who are implementing the pilot curricula. There will be a separate meeting for each curriculum: Food is Elementary, Family Cook, Recess Rocks™ and SPARK. Teachers from the eight intervention schools will be expected to attend the focus group meeting for their respective curriculum.

SAVE THE DATE!

Thursday, June 4, 2009
WEITZMAN SYMPOSIUM
Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

Symposium will include a report on preliminary **Food & Fitness Program** data.



"Breakfast at the Capitol"
January 14, 2009 Program Forum, Hartford, CT



Food & Fitness

Nutrition & Physical Activity Program SPRING 2009 Newsletter



School Programs Help Combat Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity poses a serious threat to our nation's health, health care system and economy. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "In the United States, the obesity rate is more than four times higher among children ages 6 to 11 than it was a generation ago. During that same period, the rate has more than tripled among adolescents ages 12 to 19 and more than doubled among children ages 2 to 5. Today, nearly one-third of our nation's children and adolescents are either overweight or obese, placing them at increased risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and many other serious health conditions. Preventing obesity during childhood is critical, as research shows that obese adolescents have up to an 80 percent chance of becoming obese adults".

Through support from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut Cancer Partnership, the Community Health Center's **Food & Fitness Program** is testing curricula designed to support healthier eating and physical activity in elementary schools. In June, at the conclusion of this one-year study, the **Food & Fitness Program** will make recommendations to the DPH regarding ways for schools throughout the state to implement wellness curriculum and healthy living. The recommendations will derive from input gathered through the ongoing participatory evaluation that is being led by the Yale University Consultation Center.



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SPRING 2009

Food & Fitness

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
**Nutrition & Physical
Activity Program**



This publication is sponsored by grant #2008-0321 from the DPH.

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Community Health Center's Food & Fitness Program
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Research Supports Recess!

By Julie Deak, Recess Rocks™ Trainer

In 2007 The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation surveyed 1,055 schools and found that the number one opportunity to promote physical activity in schools, reaching the most children, for the most number of minutes, is recess. Recess Rocks™ takes full advantage of this underused opportunity. This winter, our 8 schools have been enjoying Recess Rocks™ classes once a week with a wide array of movement forms including Tai chi, Breakdance, Nia, Hip Hop, Yoga and Latin Body Movement. The children appreciate the variety and the fresh faces and have been eager to participate. Teachers, principals, and aides have been seen dancing right along-side the children, which the kids love. And parents have given their positive feedback as well, such as Monica Belyea, parent of a Kindergarten student at Farm Hill School who recently wrote:

"One of the noticeable Kindergarten transitions for my daughter was the decrease in gross motor activity. Her teacher does a nice job of including movement in their daily routine but there isn't time

in the school day for the children to really get moving. Recess Rocks™ makes the most of the recess time by getting the children active and having fun. My daughter says 'I love Miss Kim and it's really fun!' With the increasing rates of child obesity and achievement gap, adding back some physical activity in the school day is one way to help our children live healthier and in turn be more successful in school."

Recess Rocks™ supports teacher's efforts to promote active learning by offering half hour movement sessions that tie into particular units those teachers are presenting. In April we will be conducting at least 2 special sessions in each classroom covering a range of 7 different topics such as "Muscles & Bones"—science, "Punctuation"—language arts, and "Measuring"—math.

And lastly, scheduling is underway for the Recess Rocks™ family dance parties; celebrations that will allow the children to share what they have learned with their families and enjoy dancing together, healthy snacks and games.



FamilyCook Productions Encourages Community Partnerships

By Lynn Fredericks, FamilyCook Founder

Give even a top notch instructor the challenge of cooking three recipes of Nigerian Chicken Stew with 20 young children in a typical school environment and they might rightly balk at the prospect. When this challenge confronted FamilyCook's partner, the **YMCA of Greater Rochester** in 2004, they turned to another community partner, local **HMO Preferred Care**, for some extra hands: the group known as the **Silver Sneakers**. This was a group of retired community members who wanted to volunteer with their HMO! These energetic individuals with time on their hands, swooped in to the rescue of the YMCA's after school "Look Who's Cooking" program designed by FamilyCook Productions.

The Silver Sneaks partnership proved an enduring one, not unlike several of the key partnerships that the Rochester YMCAs managed to create to support the logistics of their ambitious program. **Wegmans Food Markets**, the leading grocer in the area, was another traditional supporter of the Ys. Soon Wegmans was helping with food costs. This partnership took even a more advantageous direction when Wegmans introduced the Ys to **Foodlink**, another charity they supported. Foodlink is the local food bank, and a supplier of food. YMCAs rewrote the specifications for the snack policy and after the 2nd try, Foodlink won the bid and became the cost-effective food supplier for all food served in the Y after school programs.

Observing these local connections that served to support the program sustainability, we had an epiphany about sustainability at FamilyCook. It became clear that we would do our best to help link our program providers to volunteers, food suppliers, local chefs, community gardeners, etc. This has proven successful in program across the Northeast. From Connecticut to New York, from DC to Maryland, our programs have thrived where community organizations are invited to roll up their sleeves and experience helping youngsters experience the five flavors of Thai cuisine or the thrill of making a ravioli with their parents.



It's A Team Effort Folks!

By Jeff Mushkin, SPARK Master Trainer

Family and community involvement is one of the eight components of coordinated school health. Parents, families, and community members can play an important role in support of student learning, and when that happens, the health and well-being of students is positively affected.

Schools can do their share by developing the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle. But reaching students with the message about the importance of physical activity isn't enough. Families must also do their part by offering children opportunities to increase activity levels and develop healthy behaviors.

What can YOU do to involve families and the community? How about inviting family and community members to participate in your physical education program? Host a SPARK Family Fitness Night! This is not only a way to promote healthy families, but to educate parents about the importance of physical activity while showcasing the quality programming your school provides. Parents can learn the importance of being involved in their child's health and wellness, and kids will enjoy being active with their families. Imagine the excitement students will have showing their parents and siblings the fun things they have learned in class. Hopefully, after participating in the event together, parents will try the activities at home!



Conferences

The Food & Fitness Program is sponsoring two conferences over the next several months. Both conferences are designed to gather input from a full range of stakeholders—people directly involved in implementing this project as well as others in the wider community who are interested and working on childhood obesity prevention programs and research.

The first of these conferences “Conversation & Breakfast at the Capital” will take place on January 14, 2009 in the Private Dining Room of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, CT. The second conference will be held on June 4, 2009 as a feature of the annual Weitzman Symposium, which the Community Health Center, Inc. is sponsoring at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT.

The Consultation Center at Yale is working collaboratively with school personnel, curriculum developers, and Community Health Center, Inc. staff on a participatory and collaborative evaluation process. Together we are gathering data that will inform judgments about the overall effectiveness of the Food & Fitness Program, the strengths and weaknesses of each of the four curricula, lessons learned and recommendations for future implementations.

Since it is important to assess the effects of the program at multiple levels, a variety of data are being collected. Principals completed a school needs assessment, student physical activity levels at recess and in physical education classes has been observed, teachers who will be implementing the curricula rated how comfortable they were with teaching nutrition and physical activity classes, and children in all grades completed a survey of their everyday eating and physical activity habits. This data will be recollected at the conclusion of the implementation and examined for changes.

SAVE THE DATE!

Thursday, June 4, 2009
WEITZMAN SYMPOSIUM
Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

Community Health Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency providing primary health care and social services. Its quality health care services are available to all, and particularly to those who cannot gain access to such services elsewhere. Community Health Center, Inc. takes leadership in promoting interagency cooperation. It is based on consumer control and is committed to ensuring human rights and respecting human dignity; as such, it strives to be a voice and vehicle for social change.



Food & Fitness

Nutrition & Physical Activity Program WINTER 2009 Newsletter

Food & Fitness Program off to a Great Start!

Program Rolls Out in Schools

It is well documented that obesity rates are on the rise and there are major health concerns regarding children's diets and activity levels. In order to address these concerns in Connecticut, the Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) applied for and was awarded a Nutrition and Physical Activity grant from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut Cancer Partnership.

The Food & Fitness Program rolled out the classroom implementation phase of its project in January 2009. This happened after several months of recruiting schools to the project, ordering curricula materials and supplies, holding teacher training workshops and gathering pre-assessment data through surveys and classroom observations in the 64 intervention and control classrooms that are participating in the pilot.

The overall purpose of this project is to: (a) test specific curricula designed to support healthier eating and physical activity in Connecticut primary schools, and (b) make recommendations as to the promotion and implementation of each curricula to and in other Connecticut schools, state-wide. CHC will implement, test, and evaluate four curricula this academic year: **Food is Elementary**; **Family Cook Productions**; **Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK)**; and **Recess Rocks™**. These programs are being implemented in one classroom per grade K-3 per school, in both rural and urban environments.

CHC is a statewide, multi-site agency offering comprehensive health services in ten cities and serves 70,000 patients annually. In addition, CHC provides behavioral, medical, and oral health services to the children of Connecticut through School Based Health Centers (CBHC) in over 100 schools across 15 school districts (urban and rural areas).



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WINTER 2009

Food & Fitness

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
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DR. CINDY CRUSTO, Lead Evaluator
ERIN MURPHY, Program Coordinator
TEJAL PATEL, Research Assistant
MARIE RUSSELL, Program Manager



Cooking in the Classroom

The Food & Fitness Study was intentionally designed to be implemented in a variety of settings to provide practical data on the realities of using and adapting the 4 curricula in a range of environments. An example of this variety is that the Middletown Public School System opted to use their discretionary funds to hire a Food and Fitness Educator, **Julie Cranick**, who has been traveling to the four urban schools in Middletown, CT rolling out the Nutrition Programs and investigating the reality of how these programs look at each school.

Special thanks to **Pat Girard**, the Principal of Farm Hill in Middletown, CT who was able to provide a spacious room for implementation that had previously been used for Girl Scout meetings and storage. The Food is Elementary (FIE) classroom provides an optimal learning environment. The teacher is able to set up and break down the cooking equipment without disrupting the classroom teacher's lesson. The materials used for the classes are stored in the same room as well. Students are brought down to the room as if they were attending any other special. Long tables and portable units also allow the children to work together as a team. Good hygiene and safety is emphasized and having a sink in the room is a bonus as it makes hand washing and clean-up more convenient. In addition, having a sink in the classroom reinforces the student's responsibility to clean the pots, pans and other cooking materials they dirtied.



The other three intervention schools in Middletown, CT implement the program in their regular classroom setting. Some of the cooking supplies are stored in the classroom; while other materials that take up more space are locked in storage rooms. The FIE teacher in these schools finds it easiest to use a cart to transport the materials down to the classroom to set up. When the classes are over the teacher loads up the cart and finishes cleaning up in the teachers lounge.

Mathematical curricula tie-ins for the nutrition program have been implemented by classroom teacher **Bonnie Gaboury** of Lawrence School. Students were encouraged to keep a record of the foods they ate during the week. At the end of the week, Mrs. Gaboury's third graders created a chart and calculated the foods they ate in each category.

This project would not be possible without the wonderful help and support we've received from our participating schools in the project. Our programs will be conducted in K-3 classrooms in 5 rural/suburban schools and 5 urban schools. The participating schools are as follows:

RURAL/SUBURBAN INTERVENTION

St. Bridget School
171 Main Street
Cheshire, CT 06410
Phone: (203) 272-5860
Marge Whalen, Principal

St. Mary School
62 Cedar Street
Branford, CT 06405
Phone: (203) 488-8386
Donna Binkoski, Principal

Lewin Joel Elementary School
137A Glenwood Road
Clinton, CT 06413
Phone: (860) 644-6501
Claudia Norman, Co-Principal
Jack Gedney, Co-Principal

Kathleen E. Goodwin School
80 Old Boston Post Road
Old Saybrook, CT 06475
Phone: (860) 395-3165
Sheila Brown, Principal

Control School:
Our Lady of Mercy School
149 Neck Road
Madison, CT 06443
Phone: (203) 245-4393
Dr. John Alfone

URBAN INTERVENTION

Farm Hill Elementary School
390 Ridge Road
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: (860) 346-1225
Patricia Girard, Principal

Lawrence School
Kaplan Drive
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: (860) 632-2158
Enza Macri, Principal

Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth Street
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: (860) 347-2579
James Gaudreau, Principal

Bertrand E. Spencer Elementary School
207 Westfield Street
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: (860) 344-0711
Amy Clarke, Principal

Control School:
Wesley School
10 Wesleyan Hills
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: (860) 344-5653
Joseph Cassella, Principal

A special thanks goes to the Kathleen E. Goodwin School, the Old Saybrook Volunteer Fire Department, the Lewin Joel Elementary School, and Vinnie's Jump and Jive for helping us host our trainings!

SOFIT (System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time)

SOFIT is an observation tool that was developed by **Thomas L. McKenzie, Ph.D.** and his team at the Department of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences at San Diego State University. It is an objective tool for assessing the quality of physical education instruction. The system provides a measure of student activity levels, lesson context, and teacher behavior during class time. SOFIT involves the direct observation of lessons by trained observers and has been used to assess physical education in over 1,000 schools throughout the United States.

SOFIT training was provided to grant staff from the Community Health Center, Inc., Yale University Consultation Center Staff and Joel School at Lewin Joel Elementary School in Clinton, CT on November 3, 2008. SOFIT is being used to evaluate the two physical activity curricula—SPARK and Recess Rocks™. Thank you to **Jack Gedney**, **Derek Karcich** and **John Dombey** of Lewin Joel Elementary School and **Christine Kelley** of Kathleen E. Goodwin School for their assistance in evaluating and helping to select the SOFIT tool for the project.

Pre-intervention SOFIT observations were conducted over the months of November and December in the implementation schools and will be taking place in January in the control schools. Observations will take place in the spring when post intervention data will be collected.



Recess Rocks™ Teacher Workshop

The Recess Rocks™ Workshop was held at Jump and Jive Dance Studio in Middletown, CT on November 21, 2008. **Kim Thibodeau** (Recess Rocks™ Curriculum Consultant) and **Julie Deak** (Recess Rocks™ Trainer) were the presenters.

Recess Rocks™ demonstrated how teachers can seamlessly blend a variety of unique movements into their curriculum and keep students moving throughout the day. The philosophy and exercise techniques associated with Tai Chi, Yoga, Modern and African dance were elaborated on extensively. Attendees also had the opportunity to partake in a Recess Rocks™ movement class.

SPARK (Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids) Teacher Workshop

The SPARK Workshops were held at Lewin Joel Elementary School in Clinton, CT on November 17 and 18, 2008. Elite trainer, **John Hitchwa**, was the presenter.

The first day of training focused on classroom techniques and equipment for grades K-2. Personal best is the philosophy SPARK emphasized. Attendees were motivated to embrace new ideas and apply these ideas to their instructional methodology. Throughout the workshop educators were encouraged to actively participate in low key, non-competitive games. These hands-on activities provided instructional and visual cues in regards to creating and implementing lessons that will enable students to move at moderate to vigorous rate throughout an entire class. The materials presented ultimately gave educators the tools to make students more confident movers, which will in turn provide them with lifelong wellness.

Day two focused on the grades 3-4 curricula. Educators learned organizational, management and instructional techniques designed to increase levels of physical activity in their lessons. Teachers participated in hands-on activities throughout the day and observed a third grade SPARK class led by John Hitchwa.

Follow-up SPARK workshops are scheduled to take place on January 22 and 23, 2009. Once again, we will be fortunate to have the trainings take place in the impressive gym at Lewin Joel School. We are grateful to Co-Principals **Claudia Norman** and **Jack Gedney**, for graciously hosting the SPARK trainings.

Food Is Elementary Teachers Workshop

The Food is Elementary Workshops took place on December 1 and 2, 2008 at Clark Memorial Field/Fireman's Field in Old Saybrook. We are grateful to the **Old Saybrook Volunteer Fire Department** for allowing us to use their community hall for both of the nutrition programs. We are also grateful to Principal **Sheila Brown** of Kathleen E. Goodwin School for making the arrangements for the use of the facility, which proved to be the perfect location with the large commercial kitchen and training rooms.

Consultant and founder of Food is Elementary (FIE) and The Food Studies Institute, **Dr. Antonia Demas**, led the two day workshop, which introduced the teachers to the 10 lesson FIE curriculum. Teachers learned about USDA commodity foods. Proper knife safety skills were addressed to ensure that teachers were comfortable and able to demonstrate these techniques to their students to ensure safety. Teachers also had the opportunity to work with other FIE teachers and prepare the recipes that they will be presenting and cooking with their students throughout the school year. In addition, teachers were put into small groups and role-played how they would teach the lesson and what resources they might include in the lesson. The workshop concluded with a sit down lunch which allowed the teachers to sample the delicious recipes they made and will bring back to the classroom.

Family Cook Teacher Workshop

Family Cook Productions (FCP) held its teacher training workshops over December 3-5, 2008 at Fireman's Field in Old Saybrook. FCP Consultant and founder, **Lynn Fredericks**, presented a curriculum overview to participating K-3 teachers on the first day of the training. Day two focused on the K-2 curricula and day three was dedicated to the second and third grade curriculum.

The three-day workshop went over the curriculum content that will be implemented into the 8 urban/rural schools throughout CT. Teachers were able to practice the cooking lessons that applied to their grade. In addition, Lynn went over the logistics for Family Night which will launch the Family Cook program. Lynn highlighted specific resources she would like the teachers to use during classroom implementation lessons. Lastly, Lynn went over the logistics for the Celebration. At the end of the Family Cook program students, teachers, parents, siblings, and other family members will be invited to attend the last Family Cook Celebration. The Celebration will give the students who participated in the program an opportunity to apply what they learned and share their favorite foods with their friends and family.



Everyone involved benefits from CHC, Inc.'s new Nutrition & Physical Activity Program

The **Nutrition & Physical Activity Program** will yield tremendous benefits to schools, teachers, families, and students. Schools participating in the program will become leaders in obesity and cancer prevention in Connecticut, leading to good press as well as exposure to key stakeholders. Participating schools will also receive over \$3,000 in portable cooking and physical activity equipment, along with a financial stipend. The schools will receive free training and support to implement these critically acclaimed curricula in both rural and urban schools in Connecticut.

Educators in grades K-3 who are part of this program will receive free health and wellness professional development through our program. Our program coordinator, **Erin Murphy**, will be working with teachers to help incorporate lesson content with strategies to enhance children's physical activity and nutrition during the school day. The staff will be able to participate and give feedback on the exciting programs we are providing to each school.

Families and students will ultimately benefit from the **Nutrition & Physical Activity Program**. Children in the intervention classes will bring home valuable lessons about nutrition and physical activity that they can share with family and friends. We hope that these lessons will last a lifetime. Opportunities will be presented to families of students participating in different curricula, such as cooking classes, a block party, family nights, and more. There will also be many opportunities for families to volunteer their support, truly making this program a community achievement.

From more information, please contact: MARIE RUSSELL, MS, Program Manager Nutrition & Physical Activity Program (860) 347-6971 extension 3615 russelm@chc1.com

Food & Fitness

Nutrition & Physical Activity Program FALL 2008 Newsletter

Food and Fitness Programs Launching in Select Connecticut Primary Schools

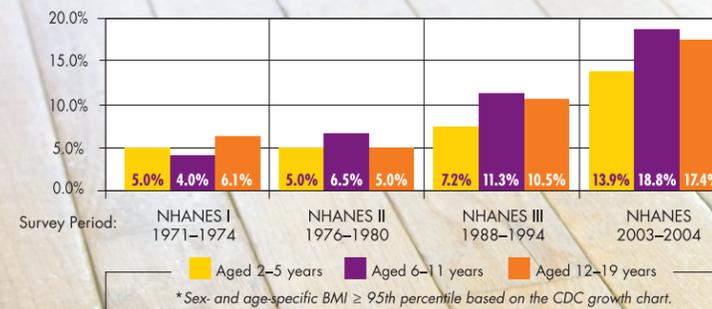
The Community Health Center, Inc. is pleased to announce the inception of its **Nutrition & Physical Activity Program**, developed with the support of the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Connecticut Cancer Partnership. The aim of this program is to test four specific curricula designed to support healthier eating and physical activity in Connecticut primary schools, with the goal of establishing a system to make proven curricula widely available throughout the state. The four curricula are Food is Elementary, Family Cook, Recess Rocks™, and SPARK (see inside pages).

With collaboration from over 100 members of the Connecticut Cancer Partnership, the *Connecticut Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan, 2005-2008*, was produced. This document helped lead to funding for this project from the State of Connecticut. The **Nutrition & Physical Activity Program** will work towards the cancer prevention goal of, "reducing cancer risk through promoting healthy lifestyles and risk reduction behaviors among children and adults". Since "higher consumption of fruits and vegetables and regular physical activity may lower risk of developing some cancers" and "obesity is associated with increased risk for many cancers", this program will teach physical activity and nutrition curricula in urban and rural school districts in Connecticut.

It is now more important than ever to implement the **Nutrition & Physical Activity Program** in Connecticut primary schools. Over the past 30 years, the nationwide prevalence of childhood overweight has more than quadrupled for **children ages 6-11 (4.0% to 18.8%)**, and has nearly tripled for **children ages 2-5 (from 5.0% to 13.9%)** and **children ages 12-19 (6.1% to 17.4%)**. In Connecticut, overweight and obesity has reached its highest levels, with **67% of men** and **44% of women** being classified as overweight or obese. With low physical activity, poor diet, and obesity leading to an increased risk of cancer, it is more important than ever to support physical activity and nutrition programs in our elementary schools.



Prevalence of Overweight* Among U.S. Children and Adolescents (Aged 2-19 Years)
National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES)



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PREMIERE ISSUE - FALL 2008 Food & Fitness

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Community Health Center, Inc.
works with teachers, administrators, and parents
on an exciting new project to nurture
healthy students and families—

Nutrition & Physical Activity Program

Community Health Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency providing primary health care and social services. Its quality health care services are available to all, and particularly to those who cannot gain access to such services elsewhere. Community Health Center, Inc. takes leadership in promoting interagency cooperation. It is based on consumer control and is committed to ensuring human rights and respecting human dignity; as such, it strives to be a voice and vehicle for social change.

The **Nutrition & Physical Activity Program** is a community based participatory research project. This means that we will be working with all of the people who have a stake in the project outcomes (teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community at large) to get feedback on your wants, needs, and suggestions for the program. By including all stakeholders, we'll be empowering you as well as helping the programs work for everyone involved.

The participatory evaluation is headed by **Dr. Cindy Crusto** of the Yale University School of Medicine, The Division of Prevention and Community Research, The Consultation Center. In this project, we will be working with one classroom per grade (K-3) per school. We will be looking at the effectiveness of each of four physical activity or nutrition programs in each grade level (K-3), one program per classroom, both in rural and elementary schools.

Mary Farnsworth, Manager of the Community Health and Wellness Department, secured the Nutrition and Physical Activity grant. The grant is under the auspices of the Weitzman Research Center at the Community Health Center, Inc.



We have four very exciting curricula to implement, which are as follows:

Food is Elementary

This curriculum teaches children about food, nutrition, culture, and healthy living. It educates children about the relationship between food choices and disease prevention, encourages a child's natural curiosity and creativity to be the foundation of learning, provides children with the life skill of food preparation through hands-on interactive experiences, and introduces healthful foods through the traditions and arts of different cultures.



Family Cook

The Family Cook philosophy involves taking a holistic approach to creating healthy eating habits with the entire family. This program teaches basic nutrition messages, cooking skills development, encourages parents to let kids help cook healthy meals with fresh ingredients at home, and teaches healthy meal strategies that can be varied by the season. Also, third grade participants in this program will work on a community garden!



Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK)

This program represents a collection of exemplary, research-based physical activity/nutrition programs that began in 1989. Numerous referred publications (40 to date) have shown evidence of achievement in physical activity, physical fitness, lesson context and teacher behavior, academic achievement, motor skill development, student enjoyment of the program, adiposity, long term effects, and process measures (parent behavior, teacher acceptance of the program).



Recess Rocks™

Recess Rocks™ is a Connecticut-based curriculum designed to bring greater physical activity to schools in a non-invasive way that supports and includes existing local resources. Recess Rocks™ provides schools with the support and training to implement systemic changes with regard to physical activity, use of community resources, introduction to new ways to become physically active, and inclusion of parents in healthy choices in the school day in a way that is fun and engaging.