



## 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.

**For 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

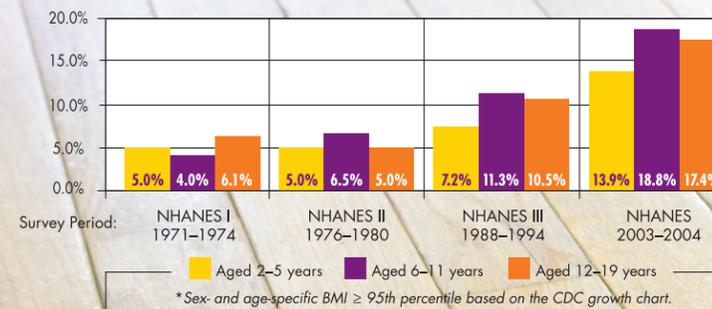
The Community Health Center, Inc. is pleased to announce the inception of its **Nutrition & Physical Activity Program**, developed with the support of the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Connecticut Cancer Partnership. The aim of this program is to test four specific curricula designed 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

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



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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.  
Curricula Consultant: Antonia Demas, Ph.D.  
<http://www.foodstudies.org>



## 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!  
Curricula Consultant: Lynn Fredericks  
<http://www.familycookproductions.com/>



## 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).  
Curricula Consultant: Donna Boyd  
<http://www.sparkpe.org/>



## 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.  
Curricula Consultant: Kim Renee Thibodeau