



Looking for new wellness program ideas?

Need suggestions for making your wellness programs more exciting? Want to know what other school districts are doing? You can read success stories from other districts on the Trust Web site.

Whether your district is large or small, you will find ideas on the following topics: health screenings,



overall wellness programs, physical activity, staff wellness days, health fairs, stress management, and weight loss/nutrition. To access success stories,

Go to:

weatrust.com/swl

▶ Success stories

This newsletter is for individuals who have agreed to assist us with our health promotion programs at school districts. Please pass this newsletter to others in your district who may be interested in this information, such as your wellness committee and/or Human Resources Department.

2006–2007 staff wellness grant information

The Trust is pleased to offer the third Staff Wellness Grant Program to assist districts in funding staff wellness activities. The application form and a letter outlining grant criteria were recently sent to Staff Wellness Liaisons (SWLs) and District Administrators.

Districts will be eligible to receive \$5 for each health plan participant who completes the health assessment by April 21, 2006. The number of participants from each district can be found on the Trust Web site at weatrust.com/swl. Click on “2006–2007 Health Assessment” and then click on “Check participation data for your district.” Final participation numbers will be posted on Friday, May 5, 2006.

Completed grant applications will be accepted from May 5, 2006, through September 29, 2006. If the health assessment has been completed by at least 50% of those who are eligible to complete it, the district will be eligible for a minimum grant of \$300.

Grant criteria

Here are the grant criteria for 2006–2007:

- Wellness activities funded by the grant must address at least two of the top three health risks for the district, which are based on the aggregate data from the health assessment. These risks will also be posted on the Trust Web site on May 5.
- At least 75% of grant dollars must be used for measurable activities and up to 25% may be used for nonmeasurable activities. A list of measurable activities is included in the application mailing.
- Activities funded by the grant may be offered to all staff members, regardless of whether they are covered by a Trust health insurance plan.
- Grant dollars may not be used for students or to purchase any type of food or beverage, including water.

Grant deadlines

An application must be submitted by September 29, 2006, in order to be awarded grant funding. Signatures of the SWL and the district administrator are required on the application. The SWL will be considered the primary contact for the grant.

Contact your district’s health educator at (800) 279-4000 with any questions or for assistance.

2006 workshops scheduled

The annual Staff Wellness Liaison Workshops will be held in August 2006 at the following locations:

- **Tuesday, August 1**
Waukesha Country Springs Hotel
- **Thursday, August 3**
Green Bay Radisson Hotel and Conference Center
- **Tuesday, August 8**
La Crosse Best Western Midway Hotel
- **Tuesday, August 15**
Hayward Comfort Suites
(*New location*)

Each workshop will begin with registration at 7:45 a.m. and adjourn at 2 p.m. (2:30 p.m. for new Staff Wellness Liaisons). By popular demand, Jeffery McMullen will return as our keynote speaker. His keynote address is entitled “Living Life at the Pinnacle.”

We have again extended the workshop to include discussions after lunch and have added an orientation session for new Staff Wellness Liaisons (a 30-minute session beginning at 2 p.m.).

You asked for a fitness activity and we listened—there will be a 30-minute fitness break this year with planned activities. No change in clothing will be needed to participate in the fitness break; you just need a great attitude and an expectation to have fun!

Mark your calendar now and plan on attending. Invitations will be mailed in late spring.

Merrill School District staff loses 340 pounds



Merrill staff pose with turkeys they donated to the local food pantry.

Back row, from left to right: Tana Waid, Lisa Pugh, Nancy Dewar, Amy VanAlstine, Anne Caylor, Terri Pike, and Bob from Dave's County Market Grocery Store who provided the turkeys at a reduced price.

Front row, from left to right: Mary DeBroux, Jill Seaman, and Christy Rasmussen.

Last fall, Staff Wellness Liaison **Christy Rasmussen** from the Merrill School District challenged staff to participate in a wellness program that focused on increasing physical activity. By Thanksgiving, 48 employees not only increased their fitness level but also lost a total of 250 pounds. The group was so grateful for the program and the resulting health benefits that they donated 250 pounds of turkey (same as the amount of pounds lost) to the local food pantry.

In January 2006, Christy challenged staff again to a similar six-week program. This time, 28 staff members lost a total of 90 pounds, which brought the grand total of pounds lost to 340. Christy stated that two of the three health risks for her district

were lack of physical activity and body mass index, so increasing physical activity had a direct impact on body mass index. Participants in this wellness program also had the opportunity to participate in weekly challenges such as wearing their safety belts or completing their health assessments.

Christy said she used funds available through the WEA Trust Staff Wellness Grant Program to pay for incentive prizes to keep staff motivated. The staff liked the programs so much that when the grant dollars were exhausted, each individual happily contributed a small fee to further fund the incentives.

Because the programs have been such a great success, another is being planned after spring break.

Districts get creative promoting health assessment

What does it take to get YOUR district to complete the Trust health assessment? We all know the modes and methods of promoting the health assessment to staff: E-mails and payroll stuffers, verbal reminders to staff in the hall, lounge, or perhaps at a meeting, as well as hanging posters and displaying table tents. Is anyone listening?

Some Staff Wellness Liaisons have discovered creative ways to increase the number of staff who complete the health assessment:

- **Mary Bednarowski** and **Donna Hill** at River Falls School District promoted the health assessment during a staff in-service. They showed the health assessment video, distributed the fortune cookies, and dressed up as fortune-tellers to boot. Now that should get someone's attention!
- **Barb Hogden** at Galesville-Ettrick-Trempeleau School District promoted the health assessment around Valentine's

Day with an e-mail reminder: "Looking for a little extra money to take your sweetie out for a nice, healthy dinner on Valentine's Day? Fill out your health assessment and receive \$25!"

- One district administrator also got involved with the health assessment promotion. He supported the efforts of the Staff Wellness Liaison by making an announcement on an early release day encouraging staff to stop and take 10 minutes to complete the assessment on their computers.

These are just a few of the many examples of how you are promoting the health assessment. Every person you have encouraged to complete the health assessment is one more way you have helped to create a healthier quality of life, not to mention \$5 more in grant money for staff wellness activities. Thank you for your efforts!