



DAVIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Davis County Courthouse Complex
PO Box 618
Farmington, Utah 84025

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Contact:
Bob Ballew
Public Information Officer
Office: (801) 451-3501
Cell: (801) 510-5710

News Release

Administration

Lewis R. Garrett, M.P.H.
Director of Health
Courthouse Annex
50 East State Street
Tel: (801) 451-3351
Fax: (801) 451-3242

Environmental Health Services Division

Delane D. McGarvey,
M.Ed., E.H.S.
Associate Director
Courthouse Annex
50 East State Street
Tel: (801) 451-3354
Fax: (801) 451-3242

Family Health & Senior Services Division

Sally Kershnik,
R.N., M.P.A.
Associate Director
Courthouse Annex
50 East State Street
Tel: (801) 451-3354
Fax: (801) 451-3242

Davis County Kids Get Fit

(Farmington, Utah) – In only 8 years since its beginning, the Gold Medal Schools program (GMS) has expanded throughout the Davis School District to more than 40 elementary schools and two junior highs – all with the intent to create opportunities for students to eat healthy, be active, and stay tobacco free.

“Studies show that students who are physically fit are more likely to do well on achievement tests and less likely to have discipline problems,” said Lewis Garrett, director of the Davis County Health Department. “Improving children’s physical fitness can have a positive result not only on the children, but also on the schools, as well.”

In 2008, the National Association for Sports and Physical Education along with the Utah State Office of Education recommended that students receive 90-150 minutes of structured physical activity each week. Schools that participate in the Gold Medal Schools program achieve this goal.

Gold Medal Schools that don’t have the funds to provide extra physical education equipment or employ additional specialists are still meeting the 90-150 minute structured activity recommendation. Many schools are achieving this through setting up a Gold Medal Mile walking course on school grounds. Students track the number of miles walked, which contributes to the total number of weekly structured physical activity minutes.

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This year, students at Whitesides Elementary School in Layton out-walked all other Davis School District schools. Whitesides students tracked and logged 31,084 miles during the school year, which is an average of 63 miles per student. The school was awarded the Davis County Top Walking Trophy and bragging rights for the students. Gold Medal Miles walked within Davis County totaled 384,397 for the 2008-2009 school year.

“Congratulations to all 42 schools who met their Gold Medal Schools goals this year,” said Tiffany Leishman, a community health educator at the county’s health department. “Great things happen in each of the Davis County Gold Medal and Power Up Schools and all deserve recognition and to be spotlighted.”

For more information about Gold Medals Schools and to see if your child’s school participates, please visit www.hearhighway.org/gms.

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GMS Spotlight

Knowlton Elementary (Farmington) joined the GMS program at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year. In their first year in the program, Knowlton achieved the gold level. However, during this past school year, Knowlton has focused on significantly increasing the minutes their students engage in physical activity. Students, grades 1-6, receive 40 minutes of structured physical education with a PE specialist employed by the district. The students also receive 40 minutes a week of instructed dance and another 25 minutes a week with a healthy lifestyle teacher who walks with the students and provides other physical activity opportunities. All of this structured activity time is in addition to the students walking two recesses a week with PTA volunteers and doing 5 minute energizers in the classroom.

Power Up Spotlight

North Layton Junior High (Layton) participates in the GMS Power Up program and is also trying to provide daily physical activity opportunities. Students at North Layton are not just sitting around during their lunch hours. All areas of the gym and common areas are filled with active youth. The halls echo with the sound of balls bouncing, feet dancing, and peers cheering. Students can participate in ping pong matches, basketball tournaments, futsal games, and Dance Dance Revolution competitions. The number of minutes that students can engage in physical activity has increased dramatically with their lunch time activities. North Layton Junior High achieves the bronze level this year.