

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release

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### **Ninth Annual Nebraska Kids Fitness & Nutrition Day**

**McCook**— The ninth annual Nebraska Kids Fitness and Nutrition Day (NKFND) was held Wednesday, October 1st at McCook Junior High and Ed Thomas YMCA with 398 fourth grade students. These students come from across the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) eight-county health district and participated in the one-day fitness and nutrition event.

Schools participating included: Arapahoe, Cambridge, Chase County, Dundy County, Eustis-Farnam, Hayes Center, Hitchcock County, McCook Central Elementary, McCook St. Patrick's, Medicine Valley, Perkins County, Southern Valley, Southwest and Wauneta/Palisade.

"Once again NKFND was a huge success, and the majority of that success is due to the excellent community volunteers and outstanding students that assist with the instruction of the students throughout the day!" states Helena T. Janousek, NKFND Coordinator at SWNPHD. "I appreciate the time dedicated by our Executive Committee: Carrie Goltl, McCook Jr High PE Teacher; Matt Wiemers, Central Elementary PE teacher; Michelle Gonzales, McCook Ed Thomas YMCA; Susan Hardin, Dietician; and Myra Stoney, SWNPHD Director."

NKFND was developed and funded, in part, by the Nebraska Beef Council and the University of Nebraska at Kearney. SWNPHD and McCook Public Schools co-chair the event with the strong partnership of McCook Ed Thomas YMCA, McCook Lettering, McCook Optimist Club, Land of Lakes and the Nebraska Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

"Our community partnerships are so valuable to the success of this event," explains Myra Stoney, Director at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. "Whether it is a financial sponsorship or manpower, it is great to see so much support, from numerous businesses and communities in southwest Nebraska. At this point, we have been able to provide this educational experience to well over 3,800 students and look forward to continued support for this excellent hands-on learning opportunity."

This one-day event includes nutrition and fitness stations. Dietician Susan Hardin from McCook, coordinates the instructors for the nutrition stations which present information on proper hand washing, label reading, MyPlate food guidelines, healthy snacks, proper portion sizes and energy balance. They included: Kim Cook, Katie Graham, Pat Rice, Lorrinda Elson, Donna Kircher and Barb Scharf.

Michelle Gonzales, Ed Thomas YMCA instructor, coordinates the fitness stations. Her instructors included: Jeff Holthus, Kelsey Messinger, Mike Gonzales, Lori Schmidt, Ronda Graff, April Jones, Angie Ruppert, Tracy Burkey and Ashley Kurkowski. They offered these fitness stations: Stackers with Cardio, Hurdle Hop Scotch, Kids Zone, Kickboxing, HiTT Circuit, Fitness Tic-Tac-Toe, Parachute, Boot Camp, Obstacle Course, Deck of Cards, Hand Hockey and Tennis Ball Madness.

“This is a fun-filled day, focused on teaching youth healthy choices.” states Janousek. “One requirement for the grant is a roast beef sandwich with funding from the Nebraska Beef Council. Sodexo had a great lunch and Land of Lakes donated milk for the event.”

Over 65 volunteers were utilized teaching and assisting at each of the fitness and nutrition stations. “Our thanks to the great volunteers,” expressed Janousek. “We had excellent students from Arapahoe, Dundy County, Eustis-Farnam, Hayes Center, Hitchcock County, Medicine Valley, McCook High School, Perkins County, Southwest, and Southern Valley. We are very lucky to have involved dietitians, extension educators, YMCA staff members, McCook Optimists members, parents of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and many more that make this event so fun.”

To learn more about the event, call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223, view photo albums of the event at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) and review our list of NKFND sponsors. For additional information, contact Helena at [respite@swhealth.ne.gov](mailto:respite@swhealth.ne.gov) or stop by our office at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street, one block north of Arby's. You can also follow us on Facebook.com/swnphd and Twitter@swpublichealth.

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