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Hamiota

RCMP Cheering Students on at Boot Camp

When the RCMP showed up at the Hamiota School, it only meant one thing – it’s time for Boot Camp!

Kerri Wilson, DHAT.com (Daily Health Awareness Team committee) facilitator for the RMs of Miniota, Woodworth, Blanshard, Hamiota and the Town of Hamiota, said the committee’s goal was to use CDPI funding to increase physical activity in the schools and to do so in a fun and challenging way. The “Boot Camp” took place in four schools and was based loosely on the RCMP P.A.R.E. (Physical Ability Requirement Evaluation) program. It used items already available in the school. “You don’t need special equipment, you can just pull together what you have and make it fun,” said Wilson. As well, the course was made in such a way that everyone, from Kindergarten to Grade 8, and with a variety of physical abilities, could participate.

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The 100 meter obstacle course, outlined with yellow police tape and balloons, involved walking, pushing, pulling, carrying, lifting, vaulting, jumping, climbing and running. The job of the RCMP? To cheer the students on, of course. “We encouraged them positively,” said Wilson, “but it did have a Boot Camp feel to it.” In some cases Wilson and a police officer would challenge each other while the students cheered them on. Wilson admitted she didn’t just lose weight during the two-week event, but her voice as well! Prizes were given out for accomplishments such as the fastest time and the most improved time. “We didn’t all win first prize, but we all had fun,” she said. Each participating school was given a giant Tied in Knots game as a prize for participating in the challenge.

Another successful CDPI venture was a healthy eating challenge in the schools. Students were challenged to bring (and eat!) all four food groups in their lunches. At the end of the challenge the class that had eaten the most fruits and vegetables won a cooking class. “We had an amazing response. The teachers couldn’t believe how the lunches changed,” said Wilson. Changes were happening in the larger community as well with the encouragement of the CDPI committee. Restaurants were asked to provide healthier options, such as serving salad dressing on the side, adding whole wheat items and baking instead of deep-frying some foods. Placemats were printed with healthy options such as ‘load your pizza with vegetables instead of meat,’ and information on what is a healthy serving size. “We did see significant

changes,” said Wilson. “It was well-received.”

Last year the FIT Family Fun Challenge was an open-ended photo contest. Families were encouraged to take photos of their families being active – “doing what they do,” said Wilson. “Families that play together, stay together. There are easy and diverse ways for families to be active together.” There were prizes for the winners and all together there were 50 entries, with a great variety of activities showcased. This year FIT included a geocaching challenge, an outdoor treasure hunt using Global Positions System (GPS) technology (available for participants to borrow) to find caches on trails in their municipality.

Wilson said an Assiniboine RHA study showed that men in the region are, on

average, eating only two to three servings of fruit and vegetables a day. As well, obesity rates in young children are increasing and it is anticipated that the next generation of children will have a lower life expectancy than those of us living as adults right now. “It takes a commitment from everyone to address the lifestyle issues related to chronic disease,” she said. “The health sector can play roles in prevention, education and treatment but ultimately individuals need to take charge of their own wellbeing. Communities can support these things by creating awareness and opportunities.”

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Take Note

Importance of healthy lunches and snacks at school:

- A healthy lunch and snacks provides children with the energy and nutrients they need to grow and learn and play at school. Without adequate energy from food, they may feel sluggish and find it difficult to concentrate in class.
- Nutritious lunches and snacks provide children with many of the essential vitamins and minerals they require for healthy growth and development.
- Children tend to have small stomachs, so they can't eat a lot at one sitting. Healthy snacks keep children from feeling famished by mealtime, which can help prevent nutrient-poor food choices and overeating.
- Providing healthy lunches and snacks helps children form healthy eating habits that can last throughout their lives.

<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/ViewDocument.aspx?id=41>