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Sandy Bay First Nation

The Big Bags are Too Much

Sales of the big bags of chips are down in the Sandy Bay School, at least partly because the Healthy Living Together/CDPI program of Central Region has made better choices available. A healthy vending project at the Sandy Bay School has been a big hit with the kids, who participated in a taste test to determine the most popular nutritious items. CDPI funds were used to support the vending machine healthy choices initiative and get the program running.

Serving sizes offered in the machine are more appropriate for children, who can choose between snacks like Smart Pop popcorn, pretzels, Baked Lays, fruit to go, and cheese and breadsticks packs. Mandy Armstrong, a former community nutritionist who now works as a community facilitator, says that students are voluntarily making healthier choices: “In that school the practise was that basically chips were sold from several classrooms and they were the big bags – sales of those are down. Kids now are saying the big bags are too much. Feedback was really positive.”

Students are voluntarily making better choices in Sandy Bay.

Two teachers at the school have made the commitment to keep the machine stocked with healthy snacks.

Sandy Bay First Nation is grappling with the same health crises found on many Canadian reserves, such as high premature mortality rates and diabetes epidemics. Diabetes is being seen in increasingly younger patients, and Healthy Living Together programs have been working to address these problems by helping youth in the community make better eating choices and exercise more.

Contact Information:

Mandy Armstrong
204-843-2304
marmstrong.sbhc@hotmail.com



Take Note

Healthy Eating and Academic Performance

- Children's brain function is diminished by short-term or periodic hunger or malnutrition caused by missing or skipping meals.
- Children and adolescents who are breakfast eaters (whether school breakfast or breakfast elsewhere) are less likely to be overweight.
- Skipping breakfast is more prevalent among girls, low-income children, older children and adolescents, and among some Black and Hispanic adolescents.

<http://www.osnp.ca/statistics.html>

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Partnerships Enhance Program Value

Central RHA's Healthy Living Together/CDPI initiative has resulted in a flurry of excellent programs in Sandy Bay, reaching residents of all ages. The Healthy Living Together CDPI initiatives align well with other funding sources, such as in motion, pooling resources to encourage people to get active for their health.

"It's a great 'Aha!' moment when they see the cost savings of buying healthier foods."

With these and other partnerships, Sandy Bay young people have been introduced to such new sports as tae kwon do, for which equipment was purchased through the Healthy Living Together/CDPI program. Partnerships often result in double benefits; for example, profits from a healthy choices vending machine in the school went towards skating helmets.

Other Healthy Living activities for youth include Summer Fun Days, a three week drop-in day camp program in partnership with Brighter Futures, the school, and youth employment programs. An average of 65 kids attended the camps, while under-12 dances drew around 90 participants.

Adults in the community are also getting new ideas for healthy living. Healthy Eating on a Budget classes have been offered, with a nutritionist giving PowerPoint presentations based on the Canada Food Guide. A "Price is Right" theme was used to compare prices of natural foods, and the results inspired shoppers to go with healthy choices. "It's a great Aha! moment when they see the cost savings of buying healthier foods," said Mandy Armstrong, the program's facilitator.

Other initiatives include Make and Take cooking classes, where prenatal participants get together and make a meal to try in the class, and also receive one to take home. In a Veggie Voucher program, young adults got coupons for buying vegetables on a grocery tour that explained how to prepare the veggies as well.

Besides all this, a variety of walking programs have been implemented, including one in which participants in a diabetes project became team leaders who kept track of their groups' results and competed for a monthly prize. Sandy Bay youth also got the walking bug during the Walk Across Canada Challenge, in which 80 students combined their walking distances and completed the sea-to-sea cross-country trek.

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Take Note

Short-term benefits of walking:

- Controls weight, blood sugar and cholesterol levels. A brisk walk can burn up to 100 calories per mile or 300 calories per hour.
- Improves cardiovascular fitness and circulation. Walking gets the heart beating faster to transport oxygen-rich blood from the lungs to the muscles.
- Facilitates medical rehabilitation and recovery from many ailments, including heart attack.

<http://www.ec-online.net/Knowledge/Articles/feet.html>

http://www.healthyontario.com/NewsItemDetails.aspx?newsitem_id=226534058

www.seniors.cimnet.ca