

Nutrition Education Services/Oregon Dairy Council

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For Immediate Release

Elementary Students in Redmond, Oregon, Will Lead Way to Better Health Thanks to Nutrition Education Grant

Innovative program is selected from among applicants statewide; turns students into health advocates for school, family, community

Portland, Ore. – July 18, 2006 – Students at Tom McCall Elementary school in Redmond, Oregon, will return to school this fall to find themselves leaders in an innovative nutrition and fitness program. Awarded a \$5,000 grant by the Nutrition Education Services/Oregon Dairy Council, the program was selected from among eight applicants statewide. Teachers Heather Renz and Judy Shasek developed the program to empower Renz's 4th grade students to make positive health behavior changes for themselves, their families, and other students.

"Children today are leading more sedentary lifestyles and don't always eat healthy snacks and meals. There is a need to provide more exercise and nutrition education in schools," said Renz, lead teacher of the program. "I hope that as a result of this grant, students will take charge of their eating and fitness."

Nutrition Education Services/Oregon Dairy Council created the grant for nutrition education projects that encourage school-aged children to be advocates for healthy eating and physical activity. This is the first year that the Youth Nutrition Education Grant has been offered.

"We established the Youth Nutrition Education Grants as a way to support nutrition programs in our community that teach kids about a healthy lifestyle. We looked for programs that help kids turn knowledge into action to make healthy food choices everyday," said Anne Goetze, Director of Nutrition Education Services/Oregon Dairy Council.

The prevalence of overweight children and the occasional lapse of health and physical education in schools create the need for effective nutrition education programs.

Renz and Shasek recognized that students learn and remember best when they become teachers. They created “Youth 4 Nutrition – The Generation FIT Way,” which discusses the importance of healthy eating and regular physical activity, then turns students into educators as they spread health messages to family, community, and other students. Students will plan and host evening family events and share their program via a Web site and DVD with students at a sister school in Florida.

The technology will allow the program to be shared with a wider student audience and Renz said she is “looking forward to guiding students around the world who follow their journey online to healthier eating and fitness.”

Among the unique program activities, students will exercise in the classroom using dance mat video games, create food diaries, manage nutritious snack and beverage vending in the school, and organize family nights to share nutrition and fitness ideas.

About Nutrition Education Services/Oregon Dairy Council

Since 1918, Oregon Dairy Council programs have encouraged healthy food choices for life. Nutrition Education Services/Oregon Dairy Council is staffed by registered dietitians and professional nutrition educators who work with educators and health professionals. The council is funded by Oregon dairy farm families and processors as part of the Oregon Dairy Products Commission. For more information, contact Nutrition Education Services/Oregon Dairy Council at (503) 229-5033 or visit www.oregondairycouncil.org.

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