The school year is coming to an end and summer will soon be here. My name is Ms. Strauss and I am a health and physical education teacher at TBMS. As summer approaches I want to encourage parents/guardians to keep children involved in physical fitness activities. Students tend to watch more television and play video games in the summer. Even though the heat may drive some students away from being outside it is important for students to remain active. Students need to get 60 minutes of physical activity daily (Pangrazi, 2004). In this newsletter, I hope to share information on improving students’ physical fitness.

The American Heart Association asks us to plan family outings that include physical activity (AHA, 2005).

Why is Physical Fitness Important?

More and more students in the United States are facing health issues. According to the Centers for Disease Control, within the last two decades the number of overweight children has doubled and the number of overweight adolescents has tripled (CDC, 2002). The American Heart Association reports that Type II diabetes is becoming more prevalent in youth (AHA, 2005). This is due to sedentary lifestyle, poor diet and other factors. Did you know that an average adolescent spends 400 minutes a week in front of a television (CDC, 2005)?

Regular physical activity has been proven to reduce illness, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, lower-back pain, obesity, diabetes and osteoporosis (Siedentop, 2004). Even though the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis may not seem relevant to eighth grade students, this is the time to develop healthy exercise habits that will influence them for the rest of their lives. Attitudes toward physical activity are being formed during the elementary and middle school grades.

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL FITNESS ON CHILDREN

- Fewer cardiovascular risk factors
- Encounter lower rates of coronary heart disease
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower body fat
- Feel less lonely and hopeless
- Decrease in negative behavior
- Treatment for hyperactivity
- Decrease stress and anxiety levels
Physical educators at Twin Bluff Middle School realize the importance of helping shape positive attitudes. That is why we have developed a new curriculum based on student input. This new curriculum will be implemented this coming fall. We want physical education class to be a positive experience for every student. In this new curriculum we will focus on individual growth and development, by stressing the fact that students should try to improve personal goals and not compare themselves to others. Many new individual activities have been included to promote student development. These activities include a walking, aerobic and outdoor education unit. The physical education department at TBMS is very excited to introduce this new curriculum. We feel that it will be a great experience for all.

Role of Parents and Guardians
Parents and guardians can help promote physical fitness too. Encourage your children to do more physical activity. Have them spend time outside playing and remember that Community Recreation always has programs available for youth that are reasonably priced or they can become involved in school athletics, clubs and organizations. You can help your child develop healthy exercise habits!

According to a study by National Association of Sport and Physical Education, physically fit children perform better academically. (NASPE, 2002).

Upcoming Calendar of Events
- May 15: End of the Year Choir Concert in the auditorium at 7pm.
- May 16: Baseball vs. Farmington at 4:15pm.
- May 18: Conference Track Meet, location TBA.
- May 21: Softball at New Prague at 4pm.
- May 28: Valley Fair Day! (last day of school)

Thank you for reading this newsletter. Please look for the next issue in August.

If you have any question please feel free to contact me.

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Resources


