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Lundar and Eriksdale

Setting Healthy Patterns

It's never too early to teach kids how to exercise and eat well. In Lundar and Eriksdale, pre-schoolers at home and kids in daycare have been eating healthier foods since the CDPI-sponsored "Wiggles, Giggles, and Munch" workshops, which taught parents and daycare facilitators fun and effective ways to incorporate nutritious foods into everyday snacks and meals.

The CDPI committee has initiated a variety of healthy living programs and events targeting the area's youth. Promoting nutritious eating habits and making healthy food fun have been a consistent focus. "We try to reach them in their daycare years and get them into healthy eating habits before their school years," said CDPI community coordinator Chrissie Erickson. "Parents learn how to pack a healthy lunch, and our daycare facilitators take the lessons back to their workplaces."

People from community centers in neighbouring towns such as Arborg and Riverton also attended the workshop and have been busy working to provide healthy foods at their arenas as well.

In the "Spot Rewards" program, kids who are spotted with healthy food in their lunches can win activity-related prizes such as soccer balls. A couple of prizes are up for grabs every day, and the focus here again is on fostering nutritious eating habits at an early age. "There's so much pre-packaged snack food - we're all working and it's easy to throw those into the lunches," says Erickson. "By the time they get to Junior High, their patterns are set."

Adults in the two communities have been drawn to successful community walks and Wellness Fairs, while teens have taken advantage of numerous events designed to increase physical activity opportunities in the area. A day-long instruction course in cross-country skiing was put on in partnership with KidSport Manitoba, which donated 12 pairs of skis and boots. Basketball tournaments in both towns have taken place during the annual Carnival, and CDPI committee members began a gym night for 12 to 18 year-old girls with special events like bellydancing.

Like many rural areas, boys here tend naturally towards hockey, so the CDPI co-sponsored an Esso Fun Day Hockey Clinic for girls. Turnout for the event exceeded expectations, with 25 girls from Eriksdale and Lundar coming out, and a girls' hockey team is now active, with team members from both communities. The hockey arena was also a focus for a well-attended food workshop aimed at providing healthy snacks and getting rid of some of the junk foods available at canteens in arenas and

schools. Information from the workshop has been put into practice at both community arenas and schools, which have been offering snacks like fruit, yogurt, and chili as alternatives to the usual hotdogs and fries. As an added bonus, people from community centers in neighbouring towns such as Arborg and Riverton also attended the workshop and have been busy working to provide healthy foods at their arenas as well.

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Take Note

Nutrition and Learning

- Healthy eating helps children grow, develop and do well in school.
- A healthy diet makes children more settled, attentive and ready to learn.
- Poor nutrition is associated with poorer learning outcomes.
- Children's brain function is diminished by short-term or periodic hunger or malnutrition caused by missing or skipping meals.
- Children at nutritional risk have significantly poorer attendance and punctuality. Their grades suffer and they are more likely to have behaviour problems.
- Well-nourished students who skip breakfast perform poorly on tests and are less able to concentrate.

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/child-enfant/food_thought_schools-reflection_aliments_ecole-eng.php#2