

Homer Elementary

Byng Public Schools

Homer Wellness Adventure

At the beginning of Healthy Heart/Wellness Month, each class developed a classroom healthy/fitness SMART goal. These goals varied depending on the age of the students but included, increasing the number of steps taken each day and minutes of physical exercise, taking a longer route when moving about campus, etc. We are excited that 100% of our classes reached their goal. Students were given the opportunity to “try” edamame beans, roasted cauliflower, root veggie salad, and green, yellow, and red peppers. Upper elementary 4th and 5th graders look forward to Wellness Wednesdays and are more open to trying new foods because of this endeavor. Almost every one (95%) of our 101 upper level students tried these healthy food options.



Homer Elementary saw a 643%* increase in students' water consumption during this one-month period as compared to the previous 4-month period. October 15 – February 10 (*4-month period) before the healthy/wellness month initiative, bottle dispensers at water fountains showed that we had filled an average of 1,285 bottles of water/month. February 10 - March 10 (*1-month period) during the healthy/wellness month project, Chickasaw Nation and Pontotoc Health Department Healthy Living Program donated 700 water bottles for each student and staff). Our bottle dispensers at water fountains showed we filled 9, 558 bottles of water. We had a 10% increase in attendance from February 10 – March 10 which was Healthy Heart/Wellness Month; 95% of the staff reported an overall more positive mood in students for February 10 – March 10. This data was compiled from a staff survey. In conjunction with this data, our counselors reported a decrease of 37% in disciplinary referrals during this same time frame.

The goals of Homer Public School's Wellness Adventure are for students to move more during the school day, eat healthier, drink more water, and sustain lifelong healthy habits.

The students and staff were part of a month-long effort focused on active promotion of healthy eating and becoming more goal-oriented on wellness and fitness. Teachers were encouraged to integrate nutrition and health education into core curriculum areas of math, science, social studies, physical education, and language arts. The school was able to extend many learning activities by adding more movement into daily instruction.

Our school nurse, Elaine Jones, RN, BS, saw a significant decrease in students coming to her office with headaches or other related symptoms in the afternoons following lunch recess. During February 10 through March 10, she treated 12 students as compared to 26 the previous month. She contributed the 45% decrease in headache complaints to increase of water consumption and increased movement in the classroom. Nurse Jones, after seeing the positive effects of increased water consumption, implemented a WOW Policy for headache complaints beginning March

20. If a student comes to the nurse's station with a headache complaint, the student will be asked to follow three steps to alleviate the headache:

STEP 1: **W**ater – take 10 drinks of water

STEP 2: **O**xxygen – take 10 deep breaths

STEP 3: **W**ait – wait for 20 minutes

The nurse reports that 50% of students who tried the new WOW Policy have been able to return to class (headache free), stay at school; and she didn't have to give aspirin or contact parents to pick up their child. She has created a bulletin board that depicts the WOW Policy for parents and students to refer to.

The initiative will be sustained with the help of amazing partners: Chickasaw Nation MPOWER Grant, Pontotoc County Healthy Living Program, Byng School's Health Corp Coordinator, and the American Heart Association. Students and families will be helped to make the healthy choice the easier choice. Homer Wellness Committee will continue to work on wellness events that can be incorporated in classrooms, such as GoNoodle which encourages students to get up and move. We will continue to encourage children to bring their water bottles and utilize water bottle fill stations throughout the school day.

Homer principals will continue utilizing their "Walk and Talk" program when students are dropped off at the Before School Program. Hana Stenson, Wellness Coordinator for the Byng School District hosts "Wellness Wednesday" during lunch hour on Wednesdays. She offers new foods for upper elementary students to try. She provides presentations on the amount of sugar in different juices, sodas, and drinks students consume.

Chickasaw Nation MPower, Pontotoc Health Department Healthy Living Program, Cross Pointe Church Community Outreach, and the American Heart Association collaborated to help Homer Elementary students learn about lifelong healthy eating habits, making good choices, drug awareness and the importance of healthy levels of physical activity.

Contributions: American Heart Association Jump Rope for Heart Program: 100% of 1st and 5th grade students (392) participated; 192 are Native American. Jump Rope for Heart aligns with the American Heart Association's signature message – "helping to



reinforce good nutrition and physical activity habits.” Cross Pointe Church Community Outreach Program: Homer Elementary students enjoyed lessons presented by the Power Team Athletes’ Program that tours Oklahoma sharing messages about making wise choices and living a healthy lifestyle. Homer Elementary hosted “Homer Pirate Family Adventure Night” March 9 with 259 participants. Families checked pedometers at the outset with a goal to “walk a mile in a Homer Pirate’s shoes.” On completion, 100% found they had walked more than a mile. Activities included: Cha-Cha Slide Zumba, “walk & talk” about health, exercising brains while reading healthy facts, completing a “report card” to grade their family’s health, 8-station obstacle course, sampling healthy snacks, and a mini health fair. Families set fitness goals which are currently displayed in the school foyer. Goals included more bike riding, walking, eating fruits/vegetables, decreasing sugary drinks, more sleep, limiting TV and screen time.