

# LIVING HEALTHY

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WESTERN HEALTH/ WESTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## LIFE IS EVEN BETTER SMOKE FREE RADIO AD CONTEST - OVER \$1000 IN PRIZES

The Western School District would like to do more than simply ban smoking to discourage tobacco use in our youth. We are asking students to create 30-second radio ads that tell the deadly truth about tobacco & why so many young people are choosing to live tobacco-free lives. The ad should be related to the theme, "Life Is Even Better Smoke Free!" In January, we will choose five radio ads and each of these ads will have a chance to have their message broadcast on CBC Radio and Rogers Cable TV during National Non-Smoking Week in January. The teachers of the five classes selected with the writing of these winning ads shall receive a \$200 prize from the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco and a pool, skating, or bowling party for the class from the Tobacco Free Network. The \$200 cash prize can be used for resources to promote healthy living in the school.

This project provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to involve students in a critical literacy activity, one in which they actually take an action that may lead to social change. The in-class work will certainly cross all three strands of the English Language arts curriculum: speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing activities. Having projects aired on CBC lends to the authenticity of the project. Program specialists have encouraged teachers to get involved. To help teachers get started, we have posted on our Student Health web site:

- [Contest Invitation for Teachers](#),
- [School Entry Form](#)
- [Tobacco Industry Gimmicks](#)
- [Top Radio Ads](#) from last 2 years & [NTV Ads](#).

All grade levels are invited to participate. To ensure that the Smoke Free message gets out to the students in each school, the school principal could bring this contest up at the next staff meeting and ask for **at least one teacher** to have their class participate in this contest. This could be a great fit in Language Arts, Health, or Drama and a great way to spread the message. Let's spread the word!

## SCHOOL WALKING CLUBS – FEELIN' GOOD!

The weather tends to be cold and wet in November. Chances are that most people are not getting outside to walk as much as they were in the warmer months. **To help students & teachers (and maybe parents) keep active and reduce stress, consider a School Walking Club:**

- Walk with the Principal
- Walk on Wednesdays/ Walk Once a Week (WOW)
- Get Walking In The Halls (Get W.I.T.H. It)
- Walk Across Canada (WAC)
- The 100-Mile Walking Club Project
- Feelin' Good Mileage Club
- Walking for Wellness.

The walks could be done at lunch time, before or after school, or in the evening, and could be kept going as long as you want while the weather is poor. Put on some music to get participants pumped up! Parents (and grandparents) could be asked to participate as well. If the gymnasium is always busy, consider doing the walking in the halls (Get W.I.T.H. It).

Class participation could be encouraged by offering a prize such as the Golden Shoe Award (an old sneaker painted gold) to the class that has the highest number of participants that walk. You can track your steps at the [Small Steps Big Results](#) web site of Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador. Individual accomplishments could be recognized with small prizes available at [Fitness Finders](#). These resources for the *Feelin' Good Mileage Club* cost just \$59 for six classes & can help to motivate kids develop healthy behaviors, become more fit, and gain an appreciation of walking as a lifetime exercise.

To encourage schools to start walking clubs, the names of participating schools will be put in the hat for a draw from November to March. The school that is chosen each month will receive a \$100 cash prize to go towards the promotion of healthy living in the school. A great activity for student and teacher wellness with five \$100 prizes to help schools get started! WOW!

## POSITIVE CHANGES FOR HEALTHY FOODS IN SCHOOLS

Schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have been working very hard to bring about positive changes for its students with the implementation of the Provincial School Food Guidelines and the District Nutrition Policy. Recently, a regional committee reviewed school lunch menus and snack lists in the Western School District to help provide healthy food and beverage choices. As a result of this review, it was determined that school caterers would really benefit from some interaction and discussion on menu planning. With this in mind, the Western District recently hosted an inservice session at Presentation Junior High School for school catering staff offering a hot lunch program.

Over thirty caterers from around the District attended the inservice that was facilitated by Bill Allan, school health promotion consultant of the Western School District, Lesley French, regional nutritionist of Western Health, and Linda Hillier, community dietitian of Labrador Grenfell Health. Discussions centered on healthy food choices, menu planning, provincial School Food Guidelines, and food safety.

Caterers had an opportunity to share healthy menu choices with one another. The feedback from the caterers was tremendous. Everyone left with enthusiasm to try new healthy choices such as **strawberry wraps** and **berry yogurt parfaits** that were successfully offered at Grandy's River Collegiate on the southwest coast. **Smoothies** were mentioned as a popular healthy choice in several schools. For lunches, deep-fried items that are no longer available in Western District schools have been replaced by items such as **sweet and sour chicken stir fry with rice, homemade soups, and turkey dinners. Chicken and pineapple** are the pizza toppings of choice in schools today instead of pepperoni and salami offered in days past. The caterers are finding that students are eating more fruits and vegetables and whole grains in school today than they did three or four years ago. Salads and white milk sales are also on the increase.

Challenges still exist, however, and one frequently mentioned across the District is that of fast food being brought into the school from outside. Caterers expressed concern that this sends a mixed message to students. While teachers and caterers

are promoting healthy food choices in schools across the province, this message tends to be compromised when less than healthy is brought in at lunch time from outside. There is need for work in this area and we all need to take part and encourage parents to support the message of healthy choices for youth at school. More on this in the December newsletter.

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## ACTIVE LEARNING LESSON PLANS

Using physical activity to teach learning outcomes is a great way to help students with different learning styles achieve these outcomes and also increase physical activity levels of our youth. We have posted a variety of [Active Lesson Plans](#) to encourage activity in primary and elementary classrooms. These are also available on First Class.

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## SUPPORT FOR DISTRICT ENERGY DRINK POLICY

The Western School District's Policy on Energy Drinks now reads:

*Energy drinks are high in caffeine, sugar, and additives. As schools are concerned about their affect on students' behavior and health, these drinks are not permitted on school property.*

In our earliest discussions with principals about this, some principals expressed reservations about this but agreed to support it if education for students was made available. This education is now available for students if principals wish to request it. The Community Health Nurses in our District have all received inservice training on the dangers of these drinks. **Principals can contact their local community health nurse if they would like to arrange for educational sessions for students** on the hazards of energy drinks.

Special thanks to Lesley French, Cathy Wheeler-Walsh, and Ulrica Pye of Western Health, Linda Hillier of Labrador Grenfell Health, Jill Wheaton of Central Health, the Northern and Western Wellness Coalitions, and community health nurses around the District.

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