



## School Health Team Attends State Conference

This past June, four members of the Alexander School Health team attended the annual state coordinated school health conference at Salt Fork State Park in Cambridge, Ohio. The main goal of this conference was to help schools come up with an action plan for the 2008-2009 school year. Alexander has a vision to optimize the health and wellness of students and staff through coordinated school health programming in order to insure quality academic achievement. The team came up with three objectives for achieving this goal.

**Objective 1** is to increase opportunities for healthy decision making by providing health programs to students and parents district-wide on a quarterly basis.

**Objective 2** is that staff members will be offered a minimum of quarterly opportunities to improve individual wellness.

**Objective 3** is to improve district-wide nutrition education and availability of healthy food options for school meals during the school year.

These objectives will be made possible through funding from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation grant which has provided the Alexander Health Team with \$50,000 to implement these goals. The school health team has also received a small grant (\$3,000) through Action for Healthy Kids. *Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge* is a year long program

that challenges America's youth, their families and schools to incorporate healthy food choices and physical activity into their daily lives. A series of four theme-based challenges spaced throughout the year promotes, engages and recognizes students for their efforts to make better food choices and move more.

In conjunction with the *Game On!*



*Wellness challenge*, Alexander Local Schools hosted a family fun night that many students and their parents attended. The Fun Night had many activities for children and adults including health based interactive games, aerobics, health screenings, ping pong, line dancing, Nintendo Wii, Dance Dance Revolution and healthy snacks that children were able to taste test and survey whether or not they enjoyed the foods they tried. The hope is that one day these healthy foods will be available in the cafeteria based on student response to the foods.

In part of the Osteopathic Heritage grant, the fitness trail was paved this fall and also the addition of trash cans was made to ensure a safe, clean environment that will promote physical fitness in the district. There will be another Family Fun Night in the spring where everyone in the district will be invited to come out to the school to try out the trail, similar to last year.



## A Tip from O'Bleness

As a member of the Athens County Chamber of Commerce Business Education Program, O'Bleness Memorial Hospital has partnered with the Alexander School District. As a partner, O'Bleness will provide a health tip of the month.

According to a 2007 Journal of American Medical Association article, methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA, is the most common skin and soft tissue infection seen in Emergency Departments around the country. Drug-resistant infections such as MRSA can be life threatening because they do not respond to traditional medical treatment used to fight infection. What can we do to stop the spread of this dangerous disease? It's as simple as the O'Bleness tip of the month: **Wash your hands often and well.**

Make sure you and your family follow these tips from the Centers for Disease Control when you wash your hands.

- Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap. It is not necessary to use hot water as hot water may cause the skin to break down.
  - Rub hands together and scrub all surfaces, especially between fingers and near nails.
  - Continue rubbing hands for twenty seconds (approximately the same amount of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.)
  - Rinse hands well.
- Dry hands with a paper towel. Use the paper towel to turn the water off. When soap and running water are not available, it is a good idea to keep an alcohol-based hand sanitizer ready.



Alcohol kills bacteria, and it acts quickly. After applying a drop of sanitizer, make sure that you continue rubbing your hands together until the sanitizer dries to ensure that it will be as effective as possible. Tell students not to share items like gym clothes or towels. According to the Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths Web site, MRSA bacteria can live on fabrics and hard surfaces for up to 90 days. Athletes should also use special precautions with sports equipment, mats or any other shared items. The more knowledge students have, the more aware they will be about seemingly harmless actions that put them at risk.

## Assault Prevention Workshop

On November 12, 2008, Alexander hosted an assault prevention training workshop for female high school students. Health team member, Charla Johnson along with the help of one of her students, was able to recruit Cheryl Cesta for this excellent and very helpful training. 12 students attended and were very pleased that they did.

By attending the workshop, they became more

aware and capable of how to protect themselves from various attacks, unwanted sexual harassment or sexual assault. The introductory workshop is intended to introduce women and girls to practical skills needed to effectively respond to acquaintances and strangers in threatening, pre-assaultive and assaultive situations.

In the workshop they also learned that personal safety, risk reduction, assault resistance and self defense include a combination of several factors: common sense and awareness, safety at home, in the car, and out in public along with assertive verbal skills and effective techniques. This was a very well received program and we hope to continue these workshops later in the school year.

## Easy Tips to Eat Healthier Everyday:

Place a box of raisins in your child's backpack and pack one for yourself, too. Ask for more vegetable toppings (like mushrooms, peppers, and onions) and less cheese on your pizza.

Add some cooked dry beans to your salad. Or, if you have a sweet tooth, add chopped apples, pears, or raisins.

Add broccoli, green beans, corn, or peas to a casserole or pasta. Choose beans, corn on the cob, or a side salad with low-calorie salad dressing instead of French fries. Add lettuce, tomato, onion, and cucumber to sandwiches.

Canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables are also good options. Look for fruit without added sugar or syrups and vegetables without added salt, butter, or cream sauces. Source:

[www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

## Student Vision Screenings

On November 3rd, grades 1,3,5, and 7 participated in the annual vision screening at Alexander. The help of the Alexander Lions club, ComCorps and Dr. Sherry Thomas made this a success. This screening is used to determine if a child has a potential vision problem and does not take place of an eye exam by an eye care professional. A vision screening checks whether or not a child can see clearly with both eyes on an eye chart, identifies any possible behaviors, complaints, or physical signs of a possible problem, and also checks that their eye muscles work together. Without good vision, a child's performance in school, sports and everyday tasks becomes more difficult. Research has shown that 80% of what a child learns is through their sight. Early detection and treatment of vision disorders are important to maximize a child's visual potential. The longer eye conditions are left untreated, the more likely they are to worsen, affecting learning ability, athletic performance, and self esteem. For more information on eye care try these websites : [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org), [www.sightforstudents.org](http://www.sightforstudents.org), [www.saveoursight.org](http://www.saveoursight.org) and the Local Lions Club or call the AmeriCorps member at Alexander 740-698-8831 ext. 449

## Why is School Health So Important?

Numerous studies show that developing good nutrition and physical activity habits — making better food choices and moving more — provide numerous benefits to kids and the adults who support them.

### **Health Benefits**

When we ask kids to make better food choices, we're asking them to eat more of what the Dietary Guidelines for Americans calls "Food Groups to Encourage." These foods — fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products — provide essential nutrients that are too often missing in many Americans' diets. Teaching children and youth to enjoy these foods strengthens their health as they're growing — and also provides the foundation for

lifelong well-being. The health benefits of making better food choices and moving more include:

- lowered rates of obesity and overweight children
- protection against chronic diseases such as stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers
- strong teeth and bones

### **Educational Benefits**

The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools, a report by Action for Healthy Kids, summarizes research that shows a link between nutrition, physical activity, weight and students' ability to succeed in school. Research indicates that the educational benefits of making better food choices

and moving more may include:

- improved ability to succeed in school

- improved cognitive function
- increased concentration
- improved readiness to learn
- more energy for studying
- less fatigue in the classroom
- reduced tardiness
- reduced absenteeism
- improved behavior
- lower anxiety and stress
- lower hyperactivity
- less irritability
- higher self-esteem
- improved positive attitude toward school

Sources: "Foods To Encourage," 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans [www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document](http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document) and The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools, Action for Healthy Kids, [www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org).

## Students are off to a healthy start!

Thirty-nine fourth and fifth grade Alexander Elementary students just completed a 6 week fitness camp taught by Mrs. Resler and Mrs. Thomas, the elementary Physical Education teachers. These dedicated students stayed after school

on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:45– 4:30pm. Each day they participated in a wide variety of activities and exercises, including the Alexander Fitness Trail, to help improve their overall health and fitness levels (And had a lot of fun

while doing so!) Plans are underway for another camp to be offered in the spring—be watching for details in March or April! Many of these incredible students have already said they would be there!



*"Schools across the United States understand the need to close the achievement gap, and educators are working to do so. One of the most promising directions lies in efforts to improve students' eating habits and increase their levels of physical activity, which can lead to better academic and health outcomes."*

*-Gene R. Carter,  
Executive Director, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
(from *The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools*)*



## Family Fun at Alexander!



# ALEXANDER SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ALEXANDER LOCAL SCHOOLS

6105 School Road  
Albany, OH 45710  
Phone: 740-698-8831

[www.alexanderschools.org/  
health\\_committee\\_news](http://www.alexanderschools.org/health_committee_news)

Interested in learning more about school health and other health topics? Try these helpful websites:

[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

[www.health.athens.oh.us/](http://www.health.athens.oh.us/)

[www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

## *School Health Team*

Interested in getting involved in your child's health and wellness at school? Parents and community members are highly encouraged to get involved with health team initiatives because they are a driving force in achieving team goals. Please come to the school health team meetings which generally take place the first Tuesday of the month. For more information on the health team please go to the school website ([www.alexanderschools.org](http://www.alexanderschools.org)) or contact Kathy Keiter, Health Team Leader, at [kkeiter@alexanderschools.org](mailto:kkeiter@alexanderschools.org)

Health Team Members currently include:

Kathy Keiter	Life Skills/Math Teacher
Frank Doudna	High School Principal
Fred Davis	School Board Member
Gail Brooks	Parent
Erika Smith	AmeriCorps Volunteer
Ruth Dudding	Community Partner
Marilyn Dodrill	Middle School Counselor
Jim Kearns	Middle School Physical Educator
Michelle Gorman	Parent
Melanie Reeve	Parent
Jeff Cullum	Elementary Principal
Dan Phillips	Food Service Director
Cinda Resler	Elementary Physical Educator
Nancy Schell	Community Health/AmeriCorps Director
Sharon Allen	Head Cook
Janice Smith	Parent
Sherry Thomas	Elementary Physical Educator
Teresa Stalder	School Nurse

