

Get ME Active

"Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Physical Activity"



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Governor and Department of Conservation Promote Take it Outside

Do children today spend too much time in front of television and computer screens? Are young people missing out on the great fun to be had outdoors? That's the premise of a widely-quoted book by Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*. Louv postulates that kids simply aren't getting outside and learning to love and recreate in nature. The Maine Department of Conservation (DOC) - keeper of our state parks - is doing something about that. It's called *Take It Outside*, and it encourages young people and their families to get back to our roots, when we left home in the morning and didn't return until lunch - or maybe even dinner time.

"We looked about us and realized that we don't have to take our kids to Disneyland," said Governor John Baldacci.

In Maine, there are over 30 state parks dedicated to the visitor's enjoyment.

"We live in the greatest theme park in the world. I climbed Mt. Katahdin and canoed the Allagash with my teenaged son and saw the difference outdoor recreation can make in all our lives. That's why we started *Take It Outside*." The initiative, run out of the DOC's Bureau of Parks & Lands, is already off to a rousing start. "Every potential partner we approached couldn't wait to get started," said DOC Commissioner Patrick McGowan." They all saw the value in promoting activity and outdoor

recreation - from both a mental and physical health standpoint. We all know that childhood obesity is a problem in America. This is one way to combat that disease."

In a nutshell, *Take It Outside* will offer programming, tips on outdoor recreation, and links to a host of partner organizations that will team up with DOC on the initiative. With a website up and running (Take-It-Outside.com) and successful programs already behind them, the *Take It Outside* group is very optimistic. "On the Saturday before the Martin Luther King holiday, we had more than 200 people join us at two Maine state parks for sleigh rides, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and more," said Doug Beck, Recreation Superintendent for the City of Auburn. "This new partnership with state parks will help cities and towns throughout the state offer new and exciting programming and hopefully attract new participants to these activities."



Calendar of Upcoming Events

May 7, 2008

All Children Exercising Simultaneously (ACES) Day

May 7, 2008

PAN Training Series: If You Build It Will They Come? The Built Environment and Physical Activity - FMI contact Rebecca.DrewetteCard@maine.gov

May 10, 2008

NAMI Maine Walk for the Mind of America - FMI, contact darleneb@namimaine.org

May 21, 2008

National Employee Health & Fitness Day www.physicalfitness.org

May 22, 2008

Contest for Communities Award Celebration

August 9, 2008

Tri for a Cure - All Women's Triathlon - FMI go to www.mainetriforcure.com

For more information on any of the above events, go to www.maineinmotion.org.

For more information about the Maine Governor's Council, check out our web page at www.maineinmotion.org; email us at info@maineinmotion.org, call us at 207-622-7566, ext. 230, or write us at 11 Parkwood Drive, Augusta, ME 04330.

Physical Education for Maine Takes the Next Step

Maine has a weight problem. In the last 25 years, the number of Maine youngsters who are obese or overweight has tripled. The Center for Disease Control has noticed it, medical professionals and health experts have noted it, and even our Governor voiced concern about it and wanted something done.

On January 31, 2008 our legislative body was informed about Maine's weight problem, its cost, and the solution.

The solution is **PE4ME**. In essence, Physical Education for (4) Maine is a return to an educational timeframe where physical education was a mainstay or pillar of the process. The post war era was a time in which education embraced the classics: strong programs that championed not only literature, reading, mathematics, and economics, but also physical education and the arts. Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy were impassioned about physical education because they believed that physical fitness contributed to the "whole man," that is man's abilities in the other circles of life and public health in general.

They were right. On the last day of January, a **PE4ME** oversight team, convened by the Governor's Council on Physical Activity, the Commissioner of Education, and the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, presented the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee of Health and Human Services with a 68 page final report. The report recommended that 150 minutes per week of physical education be required for all K-8 students in Maine schools. Furthermore, the oversight team recommended that "at least 30 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous" physical activity practices be required for every grade K-8 youngster - with the inclusion of physical education minutes toward this requirement. In a nut shell, the 24 member planning and oversight team sees physical activity

and evidenced based physical education as the answer to Maine's childhood obesity problem and the disastrous (and expensive) health effects propagated by obesity. Their recommendations were well thought out and

fully supported by scientific statements issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, the National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE), the American Heart Association, and the Massachusetts Medical Society.

The cost of this impressive program of health and well being for Maine's school children is an investment of between 9.5 to 18.3 million dollars per year. It is conceivable that the cost of **PE4ME** to the taxpayers will be offset by the tens of millions of dollars that are currently meeting medical treatment, transportation and various services rendered to our obese and overweight childhood population. Nevertheless, the program is a huge investment in the well being of Maine's young people and revenues to sustain **PE4ME** will have to come from new state revenues. Revenues raised for a proposed new state fund, known as "Obesity and Chronic Disease Fund," would be dedicated to obesity reduction, nutrition and physical activity promotion.

Indeed, it is time to rethink and reconnect to the past - a past that cherished physical activity and physical education and their by-products: health, scholarship, achievement. **PE4ME** can turn back the hands of time. Now it is time for Maine's legislative body to look back to the future - a future of health and well being for our youth.

For more information on the Resolve, go to <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/chapters/RESOLVE102.asp>.

The final report recommends 150 minutes per week of physical education for all K-8 students.

Mainely Health: The Great Resolution

It's still winter in Maine, even though the calendar tells us that spring has sprung. The holiday season is over, Valentine's Day has come and gone, and all that remains from weeks of great food and much merry-making is a weight gain and a faint memory of a New Year's resolution. Resolutions come with a cost. Courage, motivation, energy, and time are necessary to make the vow a reality. Well intended pledges sometimes lose their "shine," so to speak, in the business of a new year.

Would a resolution that meant 14 more years to your life interest you? Fourteen years could give anyone opportunities to make and fulfill other meaningful resolutions down the road of life. Just think about all the creative and social contributions we could make with all those extra years.

A major medical study at the University of Cambridge (England) has just concluded that people who practiced healthy behaviors lived on average 14 years longer than those who did not. The conclusions were based on a medical survey of 20,000 people in Great Britain that was published recently in the Public Library of Medical Science Journal.

Four critical behaviors that were linked to a longer life span were regular exercise, cessation of smoking, healthy dietary choices leaning toward fruits and vegetables, and moderate intake of alcohol. It appears that each behavior in and of itself had an effect upon longevity, but more importantly, two or more behaviors had a cumulative or compound effect, according to the authors.

Now bear in mind that alcoholic intake in moderation is not recommended for anyone interested in extra years added to one's life. Indeed, alcohol is not a panacea for longevity since it represents empty calories, addictive properties, and a behavior that is illegal for those under 21 years of age. The authors merely noted that those who live longer lives enjoy the

proverbial glass of vino at the end of a day's work.

It is the other key behaviors noted in this study that need to be examined and practiced. Regular exercise means physical exertion on a daily basis. A daily 20 minute walk with your kids or a loved one is a great way to start. Typical exercise patterns require getting your heart rate to a certain level (known as a target heart rate level) for at least 20 minutes three or four times per week.



Smoking cessation is critical to longevity because it discontinues the habit of inhaling noxious gases, tars, and chemicals. Quite literally, if these substances are not inhaled they cannot enter your body and impair health. Every pack of cigarettes warns of cancer risk by the Surgeon General.

Healthy dietary choices involve a daily fare with more grains, vegetables and fruit. The lower foundational levels of the U.S.D.A. food pyramid are built on wholesome, nutritious natural foods such as vegetables and fruit - loaded with vitamins and nutrients. A copy of the new food pyramid can be obtained online at <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.



Resolutions can be made at any time of the year, but a great resolution hinges on taking up the challenge and modifying your behaviors in ways that promote longevity and health. Remember, the four behaviors in the Cambridge study have independent effects that are positive, but together, in combination, have a cumulative effect that can add up to 14 more years. Embrace and practice healthy behaviors this year and every year.

Start your resolution today.

2008 Legislative Wellness Day

The Maine Governor's Council on Physical Activity held its annual Legislative Wellness Day on Thursday, February 14th, at the State House Hall of Flags.

The event provided legislators and staff with no-cost health risk appraisals (blood pressure measurement, cholesterol screening, body fat analysis, diabetes risk quiz, lower back flexibility, grip strength, and BMI). Informational materials on diabetes, healthy weight, good nutrition, and physical education recommendations for schools were available for participants.

Participants who took part in four or more screenings were entered into a drawing to win a set of Nordic Walking poles. Representative Charles Fisher from Brewer was this year's winner.

The day was sponsored by Hannaford Supermarkets.



Governor Baldacci reviews results of his Body Composition test during Legislative Wellness Day.

Project ACES Celebrates 20 Years as “The World’s Largest Exercise Class”

Project ACES (All Children Exercising Simultaneously) is a non-competitive, educational, motivational community outreach program which gives children a fun approach to fitness. According to the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, “Project ACES is a fitness and unity concept that underscores the need for quality physical education. It is the largest event of its kind ever conducted.” Project ACES is celebrated as part of National Physical Fitness and Sports month and 2008 marks its 20th anniversary. This year’s ACES Day will take place on **Wednesday, May 7, 2008.**

Maine will be celebrating its 12th year of celebrating ACES Day in schools, daycares, and YMCAs throughout the state. During the event, all children will either exercise, walk, jog, bike, dance, do aerobics, or a combination of all of the above. Each site organizes its own participation assembly for the 15-45 minutes the program runs.

Registration is easy - go to www.maineinmotion.org/aces.asp. All sites that return a participation form after the event will be entered into a drawing to win student Nordic walking

poles for their school and receive a certificate signed by the Governor.

Past participants have the following to say about the event:

ACES Day was a great way to promote a healthy lifestyle for our students and help fight obesity in today’s generation.

-- Woodland Elementary School

Once again, it was proof that exercise can be fit in to each and every day of school. And the pay off is kids are more alert and ready to learn.

-- Wells Elementary School

ACES Day is sponsored by:



Governor Proclaims May 21, 2008 as Employee Health & Fitness Day in the State of Maine

Held during May each year, National Employee Health and Fitness Day is designed to promote employee health by engaging employees of all fitness levels in healthy activities to encourage life-long health benefits. Research confirms that individuals who are physically active with healthy lifestyle habits, come to work more often, are more productive at work, have fewer and lower long-term medical claims, have lower disability costs and their job satisfaction levels are much higher.

Join other Maine companies on May 21st in celebrating National Employee Health & Fitness Day. This year’s theme is “Employee Fitness - It Makes a Difference.” Registration is easy -- go to www.maineinmotion.org/national_wellness.asp. Companies returning a participation form after the event will be entered into a drawing to win incentive prizes to be used at your worksite, such as T-shirts, Nordic walking poles, and pedometers.

Simple ideas for celebrating NEHF Day:

- Conduct a company walk
- Health related lunch-n-learn
- Mini health and fitness fair
- Use as a kick-off for wellness program
- Provide stretch breaks throughout the day
- Provide pedometers and encourage employees to go out and walk
- Plan a bike to work day

NEHF Day is sponsored by:



Medical Care Development

